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've said it before, and here I am saying it again; the themes of this magazine are rarely predetermined. We have the occasional 'special' devoted to night hunting and such like, but generally each edition finds its own message, and none more so than this September issue. The thread that runs throughout the magazine this month is pure enthusiasm. It's absolutely everywhere, and it makes a truly uplifting read; well, I think so, anyway, but then I'm the eternal enthusiast. I suppose.

For the purest evidence of our 'enthusiasm special' just study Tony Lembo's piece on the pleasures of spring guns. Then check out John Milewski's account of what being a collector means to him, before absorbing the energy, pleasure and, yes, enthusiasm, of Dave Barham's account of returning to the sport he loved when he was a lad and the world was a different place.

USUAL SUSPECTS

Then there's our proven mix of talent and energy that flows from the likes of Nigel Jones, Phill Price, Rosie Barham, Phil

Hardman, Tim Finley, Gerard MacConnachie, Gary Wain the Umarex Boys Club crew, Steve Newton, Naylor Ball and the incomparable Jim Tyler. Add my gushings about the unlimited joys that come with limited edition specials, and we're verging on enthusiasm overload, this month. Having just read the pages for the final time before pushing the 'go' button, I'm all fired up to go shooting, and that's exactly what we're here to do. You may have guessed that I'm pleased with this month's mag', although of course, 'enthusiastic' would be a better word

THE REAL SOURCE ...

All of this buzz, energy and 'get up and go' wouldn't be possible, or have any point, without the readers, of course. This isn't some old flannel to convince you that we value your support; it's a plain and simple fact of this magazine's life. Airgun World can't exist without its readers and I'm pleased to say that reader participation, and dare I say it, enthusiasm, is at an all-time high. We have more feedback now than we've ever had, and that's yet another aspect

of the mag' that keeps the vital flow of enthusiasm going. This is your magazine, designed and produced for you. Please be as much a part of it as you can by letting us know what you like, dislike and want to see in it, and thanks so much to those who already do this. You keep up the good work, and I promise we'll do the same.

See you next month. ■







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Is it always a good idea, or does it bring its own problems? Jim Tyler investigates. p76

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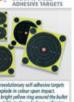


















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Seeland *











POINTS OF YOU

THE AIRGUN WORLD FORUM FOR YOUR RANTS, RAVES AND Q&As

THUMBS UP?

First, thank you for an excellent magazine. I always find something useful in it every month, and my reason for writing is last month's Technical Airgun article, regarding the effect of the 'thumbs up' hold on accuracy. Jim Tyler determined that forward thumb pressure added to surge phase of recoil, and affected the position of the gun's muzzle at the point of pellet exit. Does this hold true for gas-rams, which have little or no surge?

I ask this because I have a BSA Lightning, fitted with a gas-ram, and it seems totally insensitive to nuances of hold; thumb up, thumb down, supported on the forearm, on the palm, or even the back of the hand. It won't tolerate being grabbed hard or supported on a hard surface, of course, but other than that, it seems to shoot the same whatever you do. The only answer to this question that I could come up with is that the gas-ram has very little, or no surge at the end of its firing cycle, so the extra forward pressure from the thumb up hold is not being added to the gun's forward motion. What do you think?

S.R.LEE.

JIM TYLER REPLIES:

I have only had the opportunity to test one gas-ram rifle, Simon, and it did recoil and surge in the same way, and to much the same extent, as a spring rifle, so that particular rifle would be sensitive to thumb position.

Recoil is a function of piston stroke length, piston mass (and spring mass in the case of a springer) and rifle mass. The rifle I tested had a long stroke, whereas your Lightning has a much shorter stroke so, if the piston is light, then I would expect the recoil displacement of the BSA to be very little, which would greatly reduce the effect of thumb position.



GC2 REVIEW?

Having just re-read your tribute to Mike Wright and John Ford, I would like to propose an idea for an article. I think it would be a good idea to do a review of the GC2 and the geniuses behind it. I was lucky enough to receive one of these kings among rifles for my birthday, and would be happy to lend it to you.

PHILIP ATKINS

Sounds like a plan to me, Phillip, but how about you tell the readers why you think the GC2 was such a special air rifle? I think that would fit perfectly with our 'Readers Rifles' series and it would provide a personal take on what was, undoubtedly, a landmark development and a superb airgun. Let me know if you're up for it and I'll talk you through the details, OK? – Ed

TRY A TRIPOD

If you own a camera tripod it can be utilised to make a fully adjustable swivel-and-tilt gun rest. All you need is a block of wood, groove out a channel, glue some foam to it and screw it to the tripod base plate - great for static shooting at either targets or vermin.

LETTER OF THE MONTH WIN THE JACK PYKE HUNTERS BOOTS

With the media frenzy that surrounded the killing of 'Cecil' the lion, those of us who shoot have to be more vigilant than ever about the way we represent our sport. We've gone way past the time of being able to ignore the misguided notions and nonsense spouted by those who live in a cuddly-bunny world of their own. We're in a propaganda war whether we like it or not, there are millions more of 'them' than 'us', and 'they' have the scandalmongering tabloid media on their side far more than we do.

Of course it's absurd that anyone believes they have a moral right to condemn me for shooting rabbits, when they're perfectly happy to pay the meat industry to kill food for them, but the fact is there's been formed a genuine disconnection between animals and shrink-wrapped meat on supermarket shelves. That's the battle we have on our hands and we must be prepared to defend our sport and our way of life.

Please, take every opportunity to, politely and patiently, divert the flow of fabrication, fantasy and downright lies, toward the truth. Those who use social media and who

address, and it's great if you can include a photo, too. I promise we read every communication we get.

If your letter wins, you'll get these superb boots, which feature full grain leather uppers, a Vibram Trek Hunter rubber sole, a 100% waterproof, breathable, Hydroguard membrane, odour-resistant Agion antimicrobial inners and Thinsulate liners. There's even more to these amazing boots, as you'll find out when you win a pair. Good luck!

because if we don't challenge them, they'll be accepted as reality. Respond calmly, don't get into slanging matches, don't resort to name-calling or obscenities, even when our opponents do just that. Simply be the responsible, considerate, trustworthy people we are and have always been. Show the world the true face of the shooting sports enthusiast, and give the antis no basis whatsoever for their bias and prejudice. Never, ever pass up the chance to put the record straight.

Henry Shawn-Stafford

read newspapers must not let the lies stand unchallenged,

Henry, I'm sure every Airgun World reader will echo your thoughts on this matter, and I truly hope as many as possible will heed your call to action. You're absolutely right about the need to conduct ourselves in a manner that best represents our sport and ourselves, and polite, respectful debate, even in the face of ignorance and provocation, is definitely the way to do that.

Well said, Henry, and enjoy those boots, mate. - Ed

Thanks to the generosity of the people at Jack Pyke, we're able to give away a pair of the brand new Hunters boots every month to the reader we consider to have sent the best letter. That's 120 quid's worth of excellent footwear, just for letting us know what's on your mind. You've got to like those numbers!

So, have a think about what you want to say and get in touch, by email or letter. Don't write pages of text because we'll have to to be purely yours. State shoe size and



Something on your mind? Send us your letters and we'll share your views with the readership. Write to: Points Of You, Evolution House, 2-6 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, Berks. RG40 2EG. Or email terry.doe@archant.co.uk

PRACTICAL PISTOL POSSIBILITIES

This is my first time contact, but you have only AGW, to blame! Almost by accident I found the joy that is airguns. Moving to a rural property, with the chance of keeping chickens and ducks - amongst other plus points - we also found that we had vermin issues with rats, crows and magpies. By chance, a friend was selling one of his rifles, which we took him up on, even though at this point I had zero interest in air weapons. The last time I'd shot was way back with handguns and shotguns. Things change; the world becomes a more dangerous place, and law changes to counteract new threats ... all this brings me to the point. I have no great need for a PCP, and I'm not keen on HFT-type shooting, neither do I have a permission, or any great desire to hunt other than the vermin I mentioned earlier. I do still enjoy using handguns, though. Whilst it's been 'mentioned in passing' a few times within AGW, I'm struggling to find any info or clubs regarding serious pistol shooting. I'm not talking about the 10-metre discipline here, but something more akin to practical pistol. I thank you in advance for any information

Right then, I will end by saying that I always considered airguns to be grown-up tovs. I was



very wrong, and now have a much more informed understanding of the whole scene. I enjoy my shooting again; it's relaxing, and something I can do on my own terms and at my level. The pieces on hunting make for an interesting read, and I've gained a lot of info from them in terms of technique etc., but they are a little bit biased, with 'name-dropping' being my number one bugbear. Does it matter who makes your gun slip or jacket? Very small rant over and I will continue to read and learn

rom AGW. Thank you once more.

BOB TAYLOR

Bob, first can you let us know where you are, so that our helpful readers can point out any accessible clubs that offer the sort of pistol shooting you enjoy. My own club at Bisley has the very thing, but that won't help much if you're 150 miles away. Practical pistol shooting is great fun and I'm sure the answer is out there! – Ed

STAN FORD

Nice one, Stan. I'd add a few strips of cammo tape to that, and the job's a good 'un! – ED



WHAT TO DO?

Having bought an excellent target holder and pellet trap from Target-Air Ltd, I am rapidly accumulating piles of used pellets. What shall I do with them? All suggestions gratefully received. Keep up the good work with your outstanding magazine!

A J HANNAFORD

Good question, AJ, and I'm sure our readers will have some practical suggestions for you. Personally, I've seen shooting friends melt down their collected pellets into a solid block and use these as pellet-catchers behind those 'funnel' type target holders. Others have used the lead blocks as ballast to hold down target frames. What other uses have Airgun World readers found? – Ed



BEST BOOTS!

In the latest issue of your fine magazine, Nigel Jones shows a pair of boots and says they are Jack Pyke multi-cam Viper boots. I was on the Jack Pyke website and they are not to be found. Are they really Jack Pyke?

NEIL

No, sorry, they're from Viper, the sister company and I have a pair myself which I rate extremely highly. Frankly, it's hard to think of better boots for the money, and

those zips make getting them on and off so easy that I tend to grab them whenever I head for the fields. Keep trying, mate – I assure you they're worth it! - Ed

LEGAL ISSUE?

This month, I purchased a new air rifle in Hampshire, and was travelling on the train with it packaged, unloaded and wrapped in black plastic. The inspector asked what my package contained, I told him, and he insisted I left the train at the next





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stop because the transport of any air rifle was against the train company bylaws. There is no mention in the bylaws of any such restriction. If you wish to utilise this incident in a lawsuit for the benefit of all your members, I am willing to be the plaintiff. I have detailed documentation of the incident. There is no law prohibiting what I was doing.

JOHN HILLIARD

John – please could you forward copies of any relevant documents, plus a detailed account of the incident and I will talk to our legal advisors about it. From what you've said, it does seem that there's an explanation required from the train company, but we'll obviously need to look further into it. Thanks. - Ed

PERMISSION NOT GRANTED

I have been reading your magazine for many years and love the hunting sections. I have been shooting for a long time now, ranging from air rifles to anti-tank weapons, but I had a motorcycle accident eight months ago which damaged my right shoulder, so I have had to stop shooting my shotguns and now

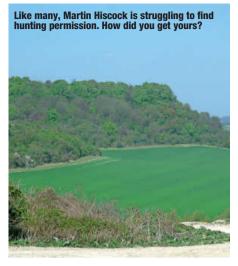
only shoot PCP airguns.

hoping.

So, here is the thing; I am over 50, I've never had a criminal record, I'm fully insured with the BSAC. I'm also very experienced and mature, and hold a shotgun licence, but for the love of God cannot get permission to shoot on private land. My shotgun contacts look down on airgunners, so they will not let me shoot at their venues, although I used to beat for them. I do belong to a club, but they are only a target club. I have emailed and posted flyers out to all the local farms and I've even put an ad in a hunting mag, offering to pay for permission, or to do voluntary work for the landowner. I'm sure I am not the only one in this situation. Any help would be appreciated. I would love to put some of your article advice into practice, here's

MARTIN HISCOCK

Well, Martin, it seems as though you've tried most of the accepted ways of gaining permission, so we'll have to do our best to



think of some other way. As ever, if our readers can help out with suggestions, that would be great. Meanwhile, let us have a think about this and see what we can come up with. - Ed

CAN-DO ATTITUDE!

With reference to Brian Simpson's great little gadget in the August issue, my answer to keeping the fill probe clean is a 35mm film container. I have used it regularly for a number of years. Brilliant mag, by the way!

FRANK WHITE



Top idea, Frank, and so easy to do. – Ed

OOPS - WE DID IT AGAIN!

I am just poring over the August edition, which again holds the first-class content standard that we have come to expect, with one niggling exception. We older airgunners no longer enjoy the sight ability we once did, and inappropriate colour choice in magazine printing is a problem that I thought Airgun World had overcome. For example, on page 39 there is a section heading in the third column, printed in blue on a grey background. Even with reading glasses, I am unable to decipher what it says, and in the picture on page 41, there is a tiny caption between the legs of the bipod printed white on a light green and yellow background that is barely visible. As the majority of your readers are no longer of pre-shave age, could you please give your proof-reader a nudge in the right direction? Thanks again for a great magazine,

JOHN WILSON

Profound apologies, John, and while it's no excuse, I can only say that on the screen, where the proofing takes place, those pages looked fine - even for my bespectacled eyes. Note to self: must try harder! - Ed

FINAL DOUGHNUT DOINGS

Re the letter from Mike Brown, (Points of You, Summer issue), regarding doughnut markings on his targets. The answer to this is simple. The pellet is hollow so, as it impacts with a hard surface, the centre of the face easily distorts into this void, and in doing so, it absorbs energy - as do crumple zones in motor vehicles - thereby reducing the impact power causing less, or no damage. The rest of the lead is of a more solid profile, which distorts much slower and causes the damage, forming circles as shown in the photograph. I really enjoy the magazine, in particular the POY section.

JOHN GORDON WILLIAMS



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Nonte ... Davol

WHAT'S GOING ON?

THERE'S SO MUCH TO PACK INTO THE NEWS THIS MONTH!

HAREWOOD HOMAGE

It's a fair old trek from Airgun World HQ to Harewood House. which is near Leeds, but once there we were able to revel in the delights of the annual CLA Game Fair. The show was somewhat smaller than in previous years because the organisers had focused more on the show's core, which is country sports. Arriving on Friday, we were greeted by some lovely weather and the show ground was dry, which was a relief after hearing stories of muddy conditions on the Thursday.

Several of the major manufacturers were side-by-

side, including Air Arms, BSA and Weihrauch, with our stand smack, bang in the middle. We were facing the airgun ranges where lucky people were able to shoot many rifles at a huge range of targets, under professional guidance. There were fewer people visiting than last year which made getting around far easier and also meant that you were able to get to stands and see what you wanted without needing to queue. Next vear's show is already planned and will be at Ragley Hall in Warwickshire on Friday the 29th of July.

www.gamefair.co.uk



MAKE FOR THE MIDLAND

Our annual pilgrimage to Weston Park in the Midlands will soon be upon us as we visit the Midland Game Fair on the 19th and 20th of September.

This is one of the most important airgun events of the year, with everybody who is anybody there to show you what they can offer. All the guns, scopes, clothing and accessories you could want will



POLYMER PULSAR

After hearing that it was on the way, this was the first time we'd seen the new synthetic stock Daystate Pulsar. The matte black finish gave it a more military kind of appeal, rather than the luxurious feeling of the laminate stock. It's functionally identical to

the earlier model, offering the same extraordinary performance and handling, but will be a great deal cheaper. Production is close to starting and we expect to see the guns in the shops by the autumn.

RRP £1699.00 www.daystate.com

be on show, some at end-ofseason special prices. The show also hosts the European Field Target Championships, one of the most prestigious airgun competitions in the world. Top-flight shooters from many countries visit to take on the best, to see who will be the champ. We regularly see highly unusual and innovative rifles and scopes that you'd never encounter anywhere else. www.midlandgamefair.co.uk



SUMMER STINGER WINNER!

OUR SUMMER SPOT THE DIFFERENCE WINNER HAS WON A SAMYANG STINGER CARBINE COMBO

Our Summer issue competion winner is Richard Oates from Gloucester, and Richard tells us he feels like cancelling his upcoming holiday and going shooting with his new rifle, instead. Fortunately, Richard's partner didn't hear him say that, so she'll never know he'd rather be in a field back home, than sunning himself in Spain on their romantic getaway. Oops!

On the Ed's test on page 18, what is the barrel of the Wildcat called?

A. Smoothtwist



FOR ANOTHER GREAT PRIZE!



CANING IT!

Pistol fans will love the limited edition Brocock Atomic and we grabbed a sneaky picture. It wears an anatomical grip, designed by Gary Cane, which transforms the handling. It's made from grey, laminated wood and looks stunning. We can imagine people buying

them for the look alone, they're that pretty, and the action is the familiar Brocock single-shot, pre-charged pneumatic that we all know so well. No information was available on pricing or delivery dates as we went to press, but we'll bring it to you as soon as it's supplied to us. www.brocock.co.uk



EMERALD EYE

The PAO SWAT scope range was introduced about three years ago and has proven popular. It has now been improved and updated with fully-multi-coated, gem quality, Emerald lenses, said to give a sharper and clearer image. The high-quality, aircraft-grade aluminium construction is rated to withstand the punishment dished out by the hardest recoil guns, so there's no worn damage during firing. Sniper-style windage and elevation adjusters have the innovative 'Push-Lok'

system that allows for quick adjustments and complete security, so that your zero isn't lost. In the box you'll find a set of two-piece mounts and an oversize side wheel, both of which are included in the price.

www.the-shooting-party.co.uk 3-12 X 44 -£ 139 RRP: 4-16 X 56 -£ 199 6-24 X 56 -£ 249

THE SMK WAY

Sportsmarketing, or SMK as most of you know the company, has a brand-new catalogue out, listing their vast selection of guns, scopes and shooting accessories. It also contains an airgun-shooting guide packed with reviews and tests of their products, by top experts from leading publications. There are lots of ways to get your free copy. You can visit SMK's website, their Facebook page, call them on 01206 795333 or *email* website@sportsmk.co.uk You can order your free SMK

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BIG CAT SPOTTED

The SWAT range of scopes has

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www.the-shooting-party.co.uk www.range-right.co.uk

SRP £6.99 for a tin of 150

The .25 version of the Panther is in the shops now.



THE UKAHFT NATIONAL **SERIES ROUND 5**

As Round 5 of the UKAHFT National Series kicked off, it marked the halfway point before the final 'Gathering' at the end of the series. It was sponsored by Air Arms and was held at Buxted. The competition, as always, saw some great results and it was Jason Bressington who picked up 1st place in the Open Class with 57 points, closely followed by a tense shoot off between 2nd and 3rd place. with Justin Raynor collecting second.

Theresa Reed collected 1st place in the Ladies Class for a second time this series. leading the competition with 51 points. She was followed by Helen Kelly with 46 points and Bridgette Vant with 45 points. The juniors were out in force, too, with Mitchell Birch winning the Junior 9-13 years class, and Elliott Reed taking 1st place in the 14-16 years category.

As with all the previous rounds, BASC kindly sponsored both the Recoiling class, as well as the .22 and it was Kyle Hampton who walked away with 1st place in the Recoiling with 46 points. Simon Harrison scored an impressive 48 points and was awarded 1st place in the .22" class.

It was a great weekend for Round 5 Sponsors, Air Arms, who were awarded the Soleware Sponsored Manufacturer's Team Prize for the 4th time this series. Results from the Open class were 2nd place Justin Raynor, 3rd place Richard Bailey and 4th place Dave Ramshead - all counted towards the Manufacturers Team title.

Theresa Reed was the winner at Buxted.



LOOK NORTH

Here's a date for your diary if you live in the North. On Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th May 2016 at the Yorkshire Event Centre, Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, there will be a brand new shooting show which promises 65,000 square feet of guns, scopes, clothing and everything else any airgunner might ever need. It is held indoors, so there will be no worries about bad weather or

muddy ground and you will be able to browse at your leisure in complete comfort. You'll also find an airgun range for sporting rifles, and a pistol range, with expert instruction and competitions, together with an area reserved for manufacturers to let you 'try before you buy'.

www.northernshootingshow. co.uk

Next year we'll have a new shooting show to look forward to.



COMPATTO UPDATE

At the CLA Game Fair, we saw a pre-production Brocock Compatto out on the shooting line where showgoers were able to try it. The stock was dimensionally correct, but it was made from a different material to the final guns, making it heavier than the models we'll be able to buy. We noted that the cheek

piece had been raised to offer better support and alignment to the eye, and that Brocock has added a section of Weaver rail to the tip of the fore end to accept accessories. like lasers or torches. This rifle is close to full production with deliveries to the gun shops expected in October.

RRP £585.00 www.brocock.co.uk

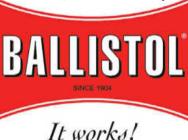


FREE LUBE

Daystate has joined forces with lubrication experts, Ballistol, to include a sample of their remarkable lubricant with every

new rifle. Made from pharmaceutical-grade oil, Ballistol lubricates and preserves the metal components of your gun, stock and even your sling, and it is environmentally safe to use in the field and does not irritate skin. It was originally created in 1904 for the German

army to use not only on their kit but also on themselves to heal minor wounds and even to alleviate digestive problems. To find your nearest Daystate/Ballistol dealer, visit ballistol.biz/Daystate



There's a free sample of this innovative lube with every Daystate.

Just as we were going to press we received the deadful news that the Leicester & District SR & PC shooting club has been burgled. On Thursday the 6th of August the club's strong room was broken into through a strengthened outside wall, and a total of 18

rimfire rifles, 7 air pistols and 6 air rifles were stolen. The following Air Arms rifles were taken; Alpha Pistol - 4471201205, S400 Superlite - 103505, S400 MPR -068420, EV2 - 47869 and finally a TX200 – 95631. If you should be offered any of these guns please inform the police.

AIR ARMS OPEN

Air Arms is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 2015 RSN10 Memorial Open of prizes on offer, including the Challenge Cup. The competition is open to all and is made up of two 25-target courses, following the UKAHFT rules. This year, the website, using their secure Challenge Cup will be held on Sunday 6th of September at Northall CPC, Northall Farm, Fletching, East Sussex, TN22

3SA. The entry fee is £15.00, which includes light refreshments, lunch and afternoon tea. With lots fantastic prize of an HFT500, it's a great day out. You can book your place directly through the Air Arms payment system. To book your place, please go to www.air-arms. co.uk to either download your booking form or register on-line.





A HUNTSMAN REGAL COMBO WORTH £900!



We've had a few problems with our text-entry format, so we've decided to go back to a postal-only entry system, but as ever, it's up to our readers to tell us which system they prefer. If you want the text-entry competition format back, please let us know - and we're sure you will. We produce Airgun World for you, and we do our best to give you what you want, so please let us know your thoughts and we'll change things to suit the preferences of our readership.

Meanwhile, this month's fantastic prize is the latest evolution of Daystate's best-handling rifle. The light and handy Huntsman Regal has a stock designed by a sporting rifle expert, which means it fits like a glove and comes up into your shoulder like magic. This fast handling is backed up by an action which includes the innovative Harper Slingshot firing system that produces stacks of beautifully consistent shots from every fill. All these great features combine to make this one of the most desirable hunting rifles on the market today!

SO EASY TO ENTER! Simply spot-the-difference and enter by post - like we did back in the good old days!

Spot the six differences between the photos below and circle them with a pen. Then cut out the completed form and post it to us. Entry costs just £1.50 per go – cheques and postal orders made payable to 'Airgun World' – and you can enter as many times as you like by photocopying the entry form. As a bonus, for every five postal entries you submit, you get one free – i.e six entries for just £7.50!



POST FORM

Airgun World Competition, Evolution House, 2-6 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham, Berks RG40 2EG

Postcode...... Daytime Tel Preferred Calibre Prize to be sent to: (Name and address of your local gunshop). Name of shop Address If you are under 18, an adult must sign on your behalf and give his/her name and address





Closing date: 8th October 2015 Tick if you have a subscription to Airgun World

What would you like to see in Airgun World?

Simply write your suggestions below, or list your comments on a seperate sheet of paper, and send it with your competition entry.

The winner of the text section and the winner of the spot-the-difference section will go into a draw to decide the overall winner. There are six differences between the two photos. Simply draw a circle around them as you spot them, then send in your completed entry form

Terms and Conditions:

The winner will be published in the October issue. Competition closes at midnight on 10th September 2015. Usual terms and conditions apply - visit http://www.airgunshooting.co.uk/home/terms and conditions.

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COMPETITION RULES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST - PRIZE SCOPE AND MOUNTS MAY DIFFER TO THOSE SHOWN IN PHOTOGRAPH







Daystate **LIMITED EDITION** **EXCLUSIVE PRICE**



PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- CUSTOM DESIGNED MI NELLI LAMINATED STOCK WITH ADJ. ALUMINIUM BUTT PAD
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- → MTC MAMBA LITE 4–16X44 WITH MATCHED **SERIAL NUMBER**
- **BLUE PRINT MOUNTS**
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FINANCE AVAILABLE



LIMITED EDITION OF 150



ED'S TEST: DAYSTATE ROYALE



I've lately been squiring around the new Daystate Royale supergun from the Airgun Centre, and it's caused quite a bit of debate. Most of those who passed comment did so out of admiration, some expressed mild puzzlement at the idea of spending £1700, or very near offer, on an airgun, and a few were flat-out hostile, citing 'people with more money than sense', plus an expletive or two. I found the whole debate intriguing, so I decided to delve further. It was a productive delve, too, and much of value was revealed.

"Affordable, fun, satisfying, personal, and limited in number"

KIDDING OURSELVES

The first discovery I made was that there are more airgunners than would care to admit it currently fooling themselves into an entirely practical mindset. These deluded folk make statements along the lines of, 'I don't care what it looks like; an air rifle's just another tool designed to do a job!' This statement, and all of its kind, are

what we know in the trade as, 'gurt big steaming fibs'. They're not true at all, and they never have been.

Yes, some are less concerned with style and looks than others, and plenty do indeed treat their air rifles as mere tools, but each and every one of us has some degree of

appreciation of form as well as function. Thus, all that's to be decided is the degree of that appreciation, which sets things up perfectly for a close look at the Airgun Centre Royale.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?

What we have here is a Daystate Regal

It looks special - mainly because it is.







pre-charged pneumatic rifle, dressed in one of the nicest laminate stocks yet devised, fitted with an MTC Mamba Lite 4-16 x 44 scope and blueprinted mounts, and presented in an indestructible case. There's a whole load more, and we'll study this combination feature-by-feature in the next section, but for now, just look at the total package, of which just 150 will be made, and imagine the pride of ownership involved every time you snap open the fasteners on that case, lift its padded lid, and look down on your designer rifle. Truth to tell, I experienced that pride.

force, believe me.

The Royale's Daystate Regal XL action carries a blued, extended air reservoir which contrasts pleasantly with the glossy Huggett black barrel shroud and silencer, against the titanium tinted metalwork of the main action block and the polished aluminium details of the barrel band and rear silencer collar. Upon that action block sits a quartet of golden rabbits against engraved trees and various filigrees, and it all looks those flourishes won't knock over a single target or put anything in the bag for you, but that's not their job, is it? These things exist to make their owners smile and glow, and they do that

"I don't care what it looks like; an air rifle's just another tool designed to do a job!"

most efficiently.

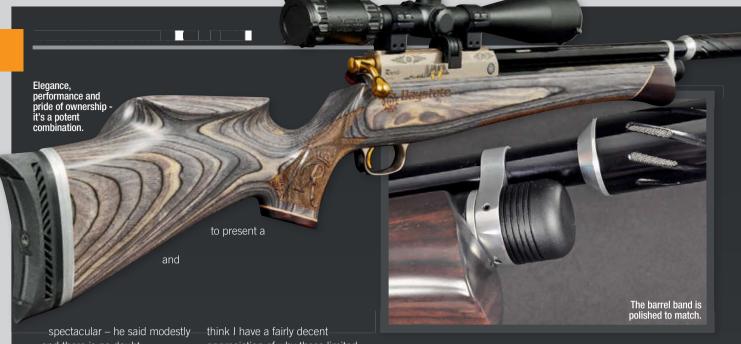
The right-hand dedicated Minelli stock is an absolute triumph of style and function, so a major pat on the head for its designer. The fore end is variously described as a 'schnabel' or a 'palisander'; I prefer palisander, purely because I like the word. The seamless fusion of its black-pepper laminate and rich hardwood, at the tip and grip base, complete with a maple laminate spacer, is a tribute to Minelli's stockmaking technology, backed by the sharpness of the chequering and engraving. An

> enhances gun fit and overall handling,

and the whole rifle slips onto aim like a thoroughbred. Make absolutely no mistake about it, the Royale is designed and built to walk the walk, as well as talking the talk.

Inside the Royale is poised the world-famous Harper Slingshot hammer system, with its low-stress, highly-consistent air delivery making the most of the rifle's 200-bar charge. The Royale owner can command over 110 shots per charge in .177 and more than 120 in .22, at the test rifle's muzzle energy of 11.4 ft.lbs., and f.p.s. throughout the first 50. I shot the test rifle from fully charged to

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spectacular – he said modestl
 and there is no doubt
 whatsoever that this is a shooting
 machine of the highest standard.

Its adjustable, two-stage trigger breaks perfectly; the Huggett silencer/shroud combo snuffs out any meaningful muzzle noise, and the latest Daystate magazine just keeps on ticking out those pellets. The MTC Mamba Lite is just about ideal, too, and it's all but impossible to think of a better way

think I have a fairly decent appreciation of why these limited edition specials invariably sell out, despite their often eye-watering price tags.

It's the very same reason that some see a Mercedes as worth several times the investment required to own a Ford Focus, despite the fact that both are restricted to 70 mph and they'll each take you to where you need to be in reasonable comfort and





"The fact is, we like to indulge ourselves if we're able"

style

The fact is, we like to indulge ourselves if we're able, and when something means as much to us as our shooting, we're highly likely to indulge in that direction. Also, while paying a fiver short of £1700 is a serious fistful of wedge for any air rifle - compared to a car, a boat, or a big-name wristwatch, it's actually cheap. Affordable, fun, satisfying, personal, and limited in number, surely we can all see the attraction of such airguns?

As a clincher; because it's the Airgun Centre, in addition to the rifle, scope, mounts, silencer, case, certificate of authenticity and those splendid flourishes, the Royale owner gets a lifetime warranty and free servicing for as long as they own the rifle. This particular special edition was created to celebrate 35 years of the Airgun Centre offering that level of service, and it's fitting that such customer care is part of the deal.

Yes, I can see why people invest in these specials - no doubt about it - and the Royale has to be one of the most special of them all.

TECH SPEC

Model: Royale

Manufacturer: Daystate / Minelli

Country of origin: UK / Italy

Price: £1695. Includes custom laminated stock, 4-16 x 44 MTC Mamba Lite scope and blueprinted mounts, Huggett barrel shroud and silencer, fitted foam-lined hard case, plus engraving on action, certificate of authenticity and lifetime warranty and service scheme.

Type: Pre-charged, multi-shot sporter

Calibre: .22, .177 Cocking: Bolt-action

Loading: Via removable, rotary 10-shot magazine, or single-shot tray

Trigger: 2-stage, adjustable

Stock type: Right-hand laminate sporter

Weight: 4.2kg (9.3Lbs), scoped as shown

Length: 107Cm (42 ins) **Barrel:** 430mm (17ins)

Fill pressure: 200 bar

Shots per charge: 120-plus in .22,

110-plus in .177

Variation over 50 shots: 13 fps for .22 on

Average energy: 11.4 ft.lbs.

Contact: The Airgun Centre 01268 780730

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RRP £1695







Pistols Range

Available now at all

PT-85 Blowback **Tactical** RRP £149.00 Accessories Included: Tactical Flashlight 80 LumRGB Red Dot 30mmLaser 65mm Pellet Pe

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PR-45

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RRP £189.00











P-25 RRP £99.00



Ref: 6111029

PT-85

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C-15 Blowback

RRP £79.00







Just before this article went to press the first oatfield was cut, time to get ready for some serious stubble shooting!

"remember, you are there to protect them and not cause more damage than the pigeons"



Steve Newton goes after woodpigeons on some downed wheat

s I write this, it's the end of July and most of the crops are still standing; the oats are about to be cut and the wheat will be a week or so later, so I'm already gearing up for the pigeon shooting that will surely follow the combining. At least I was, until one of the local farmers I shoot vermin for called me to say that after the recent high winds he had some 'laid' wheat in one of his fields and asked if I 'fancied a go' before he cut it completely the following week. When a crop is standing and almost ready to cut,

NEWTON'S LORE

it's at its most vulnerable. When an area goes down, it can be for a variety of reasons, wind, rain or just plain old vandalism, but the effect is always the same.

All the time the crop is standing it is safe from marauding woodpigeons, but the moment an area gets knocked down it becomes close enough to the ground for the woodies to reach the ripe ears. The main problem with wind-blown or laid crops is that it gives the woodpigeons a way in to the field. Once they can land, they can then start pulling

down the standing wheat and eating that as well, so a small laid area can turn into a huge one very quickly, if something isn't done about it. With the field due to be cut within a week or so it wouldn't normally be a big issue for the farmer, but this is primo wheat for the biscuit factories, and worth a fortune.

I would use a shotgun for the job, but this particular field is bordered by houses, and one in particular has an occupant newly arrived from London who has already caused John a lot of

trouble by complaining about the noise of cattle, tractors and so on, and he didn't want this moron kicking off with yet another complaint about noise.

IN LUCK

However, as luck would have it, this little bit of laid wheat was right on the edge of the far side of a field near a hedgerow, so it was a perfect little set-up for my Air Wolf. This way I could shoot to my heart's content without Mr Busybody knowing I was even there. It was short notice, but I managed to grab a couple of hours the next afternoon.



NEWTON'S LORE

"it wouldn't normally be a big issue for the farmer, but this is primo wheat for the biscuit factories, and was worth a fortune"

Around 50 birds lifted from the laid area which is always a good sign before you set up.

I knew this field well, but although the farmer had given me rough directions to where the problem area was, it's a big field, so I pulled into the gateway to study the area for a while with the binoculars to allow the pigeons to reveal exactly where they were feeding. The wheat had only been down a couple of days and it was obvious that not many birds had found it yet, but I did manage to establish a flight line straight into the downed wheat, about 200 yards from where I was parked. I was in luck here because the object of the pigeon's attention was right on the hedgerow, with a very attractive 'sitty' tree, which was drawing most of the birds before they dropped into the grub below. I knew the hedge very well because I have shot pigeons on this field many times before. The hedge was not only tall, but very

deep and I knew I could easily make a natural hide, which was a bonus because it meant I could leave the hide netting and poles behind, making the load I needed to carry a lot lighter. I hefted the gear I was taking on to my shoulders and set off for the downed area.

As I approached, a flock of around 50 or so lifted and clattered off across the field. This is always a good sign and I didn't think it would be long before they returned. There was a good amount of summer foliage in front of the hedge so it was a simple matter to 'burrow' myself into it, and in no time at all I had made a decent, natural hide behind it, tall enough for me to stand in. I had deliberately placed the hide 25 yards downwind of the tree, because the standing wheat offered a very limited view of the killing area, so I was intending to shoot the birds

as they landed in the tree before dropping down to feed.

ALREADY THERE

The birds were already feeding here, so I knew I didn't need too much in the way of decoys, but here are a few words of caution. If you are lucky enough to have a permission that grows cereals, you may be asked to shoot over a standing crop - be very careful not to trample any down. You must never cause more damage than the pigeons, so avoid going into the standing crop, even to collect dropped birds. If you must travel out into the field, then use the tractor runs because this will cause no damage.

Apart from a dozen decoys in the downed area, I also put a few out around the edges and for this I use bamboo canes, to lift the decoys high enough above the standing wheat to be seen, and also to make sure that I don't trample even more of the valuable crop into the ground. The wind was blowing from the left, and as pigeons always land into the wind, I knew the birds would approach from that direction and then need to fly over the decoy pattern, before turning into the wind just above my head and alighting in the tree with their backs towards me, giving me a clear line of sight right up to their favourite branches.

I finally settled into the hide to wait, but after a frustrating 15 minutes all I had seen were birds crossing the far end of the field on their way to somewhere else, so clearly only a few of the local birds had so far found this little piece of downed wheat. Eventually, a single bird crossed the decoys in front of me and turned above my





"When a crop is standing and almost ready to cut, it's at its most vulnerable"

head. I already had the cross hair on the branch in anticipation as it landed. As expected, it had its back to me as I lined the cross hair between its shoulder blades, and slowly squeezed the trigger. I heard the pellet strike the target and then immediately exit and strike the trunk behind me that was acting as my backstop, as the bird plummeted from the branch. So far, so good, but I had no intention of waiting another 20 minutes for a shot if I could help it, so I immediately left the hide to

retrieve my shot bird and set it up on my electronic flapper.

IN A FLAP

The beauty of this device is that it provides some movement within the decoy pattern and therefore attracts the attention of passing birds, just what I needed right now, so a couple of minutes later, I had the flapper out doing its best to look like a bird flying over the pattern. Within minutes, a group of three birds crossed in front and turned once again, this time two birds dropped

straight into the pattern whilst the third headed toward the tree where I was waiting for it to land. Once again, the hapless woodie dropped like a stone when the Air Ranger pellet found its mark and the backstop safely caught the pellet as it exited the chest of the bird. The flapper made all the difference on this occasion and began to pull birds off the flight line that was passing over the field, providing me with enough shots to keep my interest up.

After a few hours, I had a nice

whetted my appetite while I waited for the main combining to start. I visited that little hide another three times before the harvest and, each time, I shot more birds than the previous trip as more and more pigeons found the downed wheat. Well, that's it for this month, but if you do get a chance to do some shooting over standing crops - remember, you are there to protect them and not cause more damage than the pigeons, so tread carefully or you may find yourself losing your permission, and you know how difficult it can be to find more. Until next time, have a good one and, of course, shoot safely!



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PERFORMANCE OPTIONS

Choose single-shot or auto-load multi - you'll be impressed either way

I'm a great believer in the old saying, 'the only interesting gun is an accurate gun', and that applies just as much to pistols as it does to rifles, in my book.

Because of this, I like to test guns to the extreme edge of their performance and to do that I shoot from a bench with support, usually in the form of dedicated gun rests.

When SMK sent me two boltaction pistols, I knew immediately what I wanted to do - get down to Bisley and get some lead in the air. We have three ranges with stacks of different targets, so I can stretch the distance, little by little, to see how far away I can connect.

It was just my luck that the weather was blustery. Pellets are

"I was surprised that just about every pellet I tried achieved almost the same accuracy"



negatively affected by any wind, and the slower they fly, the worse the problem. Naturally, a pellet fired from a pistol is moving slower then one from a rifle, so I knew I'd have my work cut out.

CHOICE

The CP1 pistol is a single-shot, Co2-powered, bolt action with semi-anatomical grips and some neat open sights, but for maximum accuracy I fitted a 2 x 20 scope that I had on my desk from a recent test. More magnification would have been better for ultimate accuracy, but low mag' pistol scopes are easier to hold for most people.

The CP1 – M is identical apart from it's the multi-shot version, which has obvious appeal. Loading single pellets can be tricky, so just dropping in a magazine that holds seven shots in .22 and 9 in .177 makes life easier. It's supplied with a

single-shot trav. as well.

One of the first things I noticed about these guns is that they have the cocking bolt on the correct side! What do I mean by that? Well, let me tell you. Most of us are right-handed and therefore hold a pistol in that hand, so when we come to cock the gun, our left hand is free. Logically then, SMK chose to position the bolt on the left, making the whole cocking and loading procedure quicker and easier. The bolt handle is quite small and requires only a light pressure to compress the hammer spring. My test gun's bolt felt a little dry and I'd lubricate it if it were mine.

Loading the 12-gramme, Co2 capsule is as easy as unscrewing the end cap from the reservoir, dropping a capsule and then tightening up the cap - done. Loading pellets into the magazine takes a little time to learn, and some patience. Anybody familiar





"One of the first things I noticed about these guns is that they have the cocking bolt on the correct side"

with FX magazines will know how this works. You rotate the faceplate anticlockwise until it stops, and then insert the first pellet backwards through the black body. Once this is done, subsequent pellets are dropped in through the clear face plate. My sample ran faultlessly throughout the test.

TRIGGER CONTROL

One of the biggest controlling factors in pistol accuracy is the trigger. If it's too heavy or overly long in its movement, the muscles in your hand will work too hard and make a steady sight picture almost impossible. The CP1 trigger broke at 2lbs and was a little longer then I'd have liked, but it was right up there with other pistols in this class. I

chronographed the pistols with two, high-quality Remington pellets that SMK had previously sent for review. The first was Thunder Field Target Trophy and the other was Thunder Sniper light. The first averaged 390 fps while the lighter Sniper averaged 419fps, so no big change between them; both exceeded 5 ft.lbs., which is a lot of punch for a pistol and should really get those tin cans spinning.

Next, I set about testing for accuracy. I used a dedicated shooting rest that cradles the fore end for maximum support and sat at a bench to eliminate wobbles. My best group was 2" at 20, which impressed me. I was surprised that just about every pellet I tried achieved almost the same accuracy, which is unusual.





Most often, one or two will stand out from the crowd, but not this time.

These are fun guns to use and several of my clubmates were soon showing an interest. I was happy to let everyone shoot them so that I could ask their opinions. Pretty much everybody felt that they offer good value for money, and a number of people immediately saw the opportunity to customise them. SMK's Co2 rifles have a loyal band of customisers, and I can see these pistols being quickly accepted by them and, no doubt, modified extensively.

I'm sure SMK has another big

seller on its hands with these two, so drop in at your local dealer and take a look.

TECH SPEC

Manufacturer SMK

Web www.sportmk.co.uk

Tel 01206 795333

Model CP1

Type CO2

Action Bolt-action

Length 390mm

Weight 830g

RRP CP1 £129.95 RRP CP1-M £169.95







- Comes in .177 .22 or .25 calibre with up to 225 shots per fill
- FAC and Left Handed versions also available.
- Available with Bull Barrel, VC or Super Carbine barrel



- · Walnut, Woodland, Black Pepper [NEW] or Black Edition Stocks
- · .177, .22 or .25 calibre
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- · Pressure guage and on-rifle quick fill system
- Enhanced 2 stage trigger function
- · Adjustable butt pad & self actuating magazine

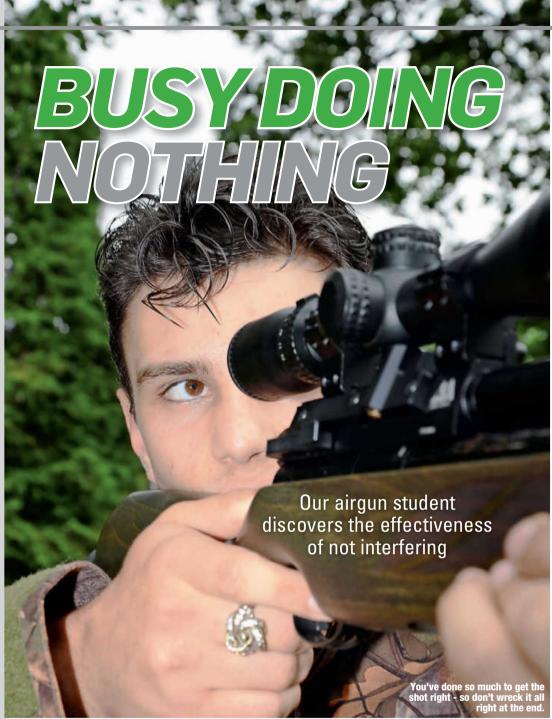












rangefinding, windage assessment, stance selection, hold, breathing, trigger technique and aiming skills. Now add pellet selection, buying your airgun in the first place, and if you're a hunter, how about those fieldcraft skills? The whole lot, and more, go into every shot you take, and it can all be reduced, and even ruined, by a lack of follow-through. I know my own shooting was. Now do you see how important this technique is? I hope so, and I hope you do so quicker than I did.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

A lack of follow-through means moving the gun off aim before the pellet leaves the barrel. We don't know we're doing it, either, and that makes things so much worse because the last thing we saw was a 'perfect' shot as we squeezed the trigger. The thing is, the shot really WAS perfect, but then we messed it up. This is so frustrating, because the problem isn't visible and we think we're just rubbish shots. Once we identify the cause, though, we can fix it in seconds ... literally.

UNDERSTAND THE NEED

The problem of lack of followthrough is a result of a chain reaction. First, we mistakenly think that the shooting sequence ends when the shot is fired. It isn't. The sequence ends when the pellet hits the target. This is a fundamental fact of shooting life and as soon as you understand it, and use it, the sooner you'll develop proper follow-through and >>

his month's technique has to be the least understood, and definitely the least used, of them all. To most, including me until very recently, it will be a complete mystery, and even when you know about it, actually using it is a different matter entirely. I'm talking about follow-through, and of everything I've learned so far, this simple technique has made the most difference to my shooting.

WHAT IS IT?

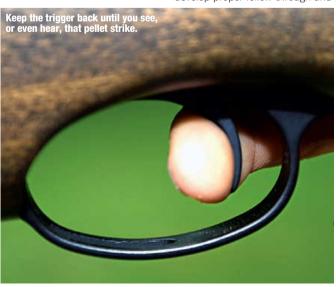
Follow-through is simply holding perfect aim after you've squeezed the trigger, and basically, doing nothing that could mess up all that

you've put into taking the shot. That really is it. It's the skill of not falling at the final hurdle, and it's absolutely priceless.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

When you include perfect follow-through in your shooting sequence, you provide the ideal circumstances for your rifle or pistol to give its very best performance. On the other hand, without proper follow-through, you really can wreck all of the other things you've programmed into taking the shot – and I mean everything.

Think about it; before you shoot at any target, you've done some



AIRGUN STUDENT

gain the benefits of doing that. So, because we think the job's done, we stop doing that job, and that means moving the rifle or pistol away from the point of aim, and usually raising our head to see how well we've done. That's the problem, right there, because the fact is, the pellet is still under our control after we've fired the

airgun, which means we can still influence where it lands. Here's how it works on the range; when we squeeze the trigger, the sears let go of the internal hammer, in the case of a pre-charged pneumatic, or the piston rod on a springer. The PCP hammer strikes a valve to release stored compressed air, and the





springer's piston flies forward to compress the air in its chamber, but either way, it's not an instantaneous ejection of the pellet. In fact, at this stage the pellet hasn't even moved. The movement of the pellet comes when the force of the air behind it blasts it down the barrel, but although we're talking milliseconds, here, there's still enough time for us to mess it all up. Now let's make sure we don't.

EASY WIN

As we squeeze the trigger, we need to develop a different mindset. This time, we're not going to knock-off early; we're going to stay on duty until the job's done properly. With a scope as our sight, as most of us would have, we can literally see the pellet home, and that must be our ultimate aim. To help this happen, try keeping the trigger blade back – rather than allowing it to go

forward – until the pellet strikes, while holding perfect aim at all times. Don't lift your head to look at the target; the scope will give you a better view, anyway. Stay right behind that sight, holding perfect aim, until the pellet hits and the shooting sequence is really finished.

HOMEWORK

As always, the best way to make perfect follow-through part of your shooting sequence, is to incorporate it right now and to practise it every time you shoot. Look to see those pellets land, and very soon you'll be doing just that. They'll be landing where you want them to, as well, and that's the real benefit of perfect follow-through.

I didn't understand it but now I do. I didn't use it, but now I do, and it's made me a much better shooter. I promise, it'll do the same for you.



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SINGLE SHOT





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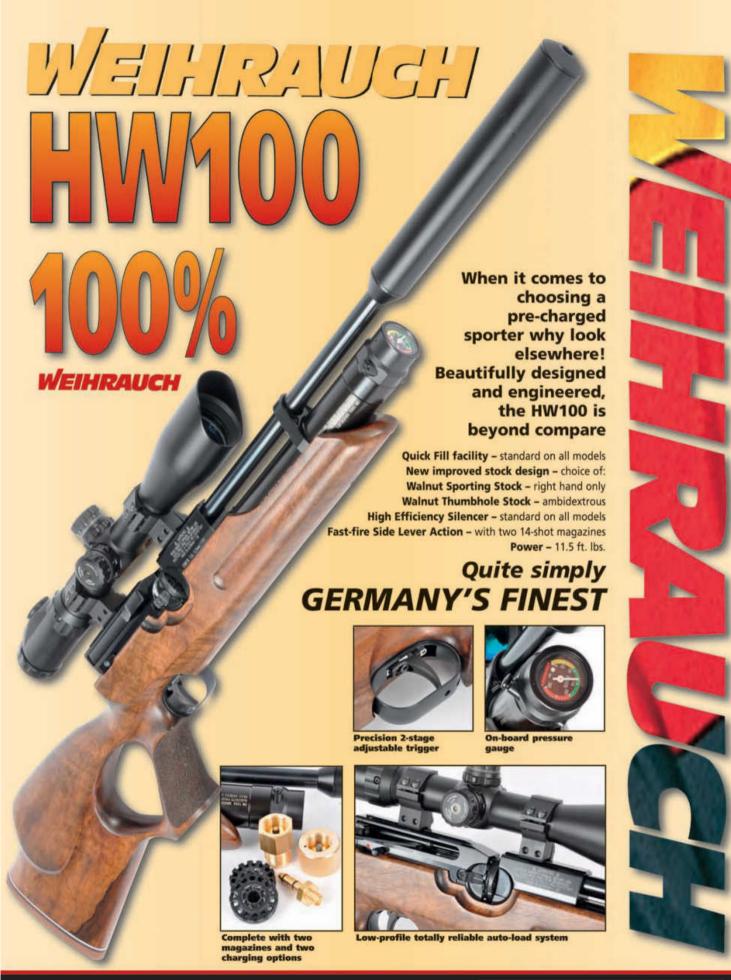


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VINTAGE SCHÜTZENFES

John Milewski reports on a fun event at his gun club, Bisley

The Germans have been doing it for years, and the Swiss have also been known to partake in a festival of shooting that can sometimes last a couple of weeks. Nobody dressed in lederhosen, nor was any beer especially brewed for the festival, but the vintage section at Bisley did hold a Schützenfest of their own on a warm summer's eve.

My friend, Andy Draper, and I

feel to it and I think most enjoyed the bratwurst-style sausages, German salad and cakes, judging from the crowds around the food table!

A traditional Schützenfest consists of a number of competitions and as we only had a couple of hours to fit everything in, rather than a fortnight, each discipline was limited to five shots per

BSA PAPER TARGETS

The first lane was a 10-metre paper target competition, using copies of 1930s BSA paper targets. One shot per card was to be taken on each of the five cards, making scoring simple in case someone claimed to have placed more than one shot through the same hole. This is not as impossible as it sounds, and was a relatively common

This wooden target would determine the winner and serve as a trophy.

for the actual scoring. For many of us, including me, this was the first time we had shot at a moving paper target with scoring rings, and the scores probably reflected this. Nevertheless, some good scores were attained and it was interesting to see the varying shooting styles adopted on this lane. Some waited for the target to appear and released their shot when their sights were in the right place. Others gave the moving target some lead and followed through after firing, just as you would do with a shotgun. >>>

"it was time for the traditional Schützenfest circular target to make its appearance"

had discussed holding a Schützenfest at Bisley for some time and we decided to trial an event one Wednesday evening to gauge interest among club members. We needn't have worried because there was an excellent turnout and the weather was also kind to us. The evening had a distinct German competitor. Once all the aggregate scores had been tallied up, the top six shooters would participate in a tense shoot off before the Schützen Koenig was crowned. Five disciplines were set up, and vintage air rifles with open or peep sights only were to be used.

occurrence when I used to shoot 10-metre match pistol competitively, a decade or so

MOVING TARGETS

Next up was a running boar event. A Gamo moving target system was utilised, alongside a 10-metre air pistol match card









I enjoyed the challenge of a moving target immensely and wanted to play, I mean practise, with this target again in the not too distant future.

PLAYING CARDS ... WITH A **DIFFERENCE**

A Bisley vintage favourite for some time has been shooting at standard playing cards placed six yards away. The cards are placed edge-on to the shooter and any nick or



one out of five cards, with some hitting four out of five.

BELL TARGET

There had to be a bell target lane and the practice many club members gained from participating in the club league paid off here, in the high scores on the night. Each ring of the bell scored five points, with shots landing outside of the bell aperture scoring less, dependant on their location. We gave

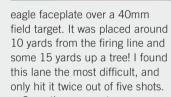
"We needn't have worried because there was an excellent turnout and the weather was also kind to us"

tear counts as a hit. The slim profile of each card can be very challenging to see but hitting the cards with open sights is not impossible. Studying the stats after the shoot, I could see that some 55% of competitors hit at least

competitors a fighting chance here by using a bell aperture half an inch thick, rather than the traditional three-eighths of an inch

ELEVATED EAGLE

The fifth lane consisted of an



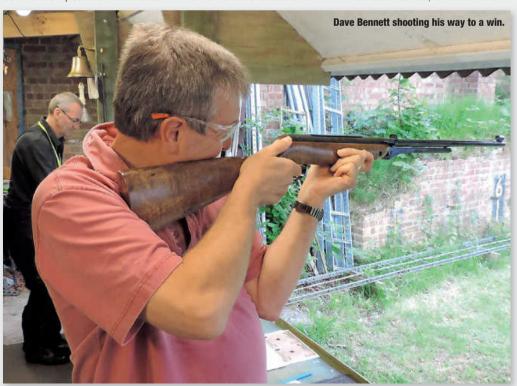
Once the aggregate scores had been tallied, it was time for and the shooter placing their pellet nearest to the bull was crowned the Schützen Koenig. The wooden target, complete with shot holes, served as the trophy. Dave Bennett took the glory ultimately, but I think everyone who turned up was a overheard were around the informal nature of the event. when compared to other shooting disciplines. Safety was paramount, but so was eniovment. I have a milestone birthday next year and I'm wondering if the club would allow me to celebrate with all

the traditional Schützenfest

My sincere thanks to Schützenmeister Andy Draper for working extremely hard, to ensure that others had an immensely enjoyable time. Thanks also to Chris White and my wife, Jo, for organising much of the catering.







circular target to make its appearance. The top five scorers each took one shot at the target, winner. Some of the comments I who enjoy vintage airguns over a couple of day's shooting and socialising. There's food for thought.

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ULTIMATE SPORTER



LTIMATE

It's fair to say that if you've been involved in shooting for a while, you will have observed that over the years, levels of adjustment previously available only on high-end, match target or field target rifles, are now starting to filter down to the more mainstream field and hunting

prevalence in mainstream shooting is that, with modern PCPs reaching something of a plateau in terms of accuracy and consistency, the only real way left to improve the performance of the rifle is to improve its interaction with the shooter. Notice I've said. 'improve the rifle's performance'

as opposed to 'the shooter'. What we have to realise, of course, is that modern PCPs are capable of single-hole groups, time after time. That is, until we put them in the hands of the shooter. As much as we might hate to admit it, it's us, 'the nuts behind the butts' who are now the limiting factor on a

rifle's accuracy.

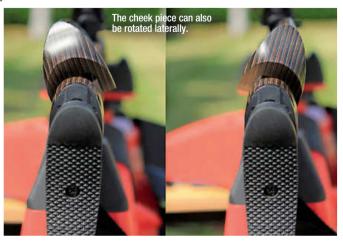
SYNERGY

The solution is simple; if you improve the shooter's interaction with the rifle, you will improve the performance of the shooter and the rifle as a whole. In pull-plopbingo terms this increased interaction is known as 'synergy'. To the likes of you and I, though, it just means that the rifle fits us better, and because of that we find it easier get a better sight picture. If you're a hunter, you'll already know how important it is to be able to shoulder the rifle quickly, and to get the sights on the quarry before it decides to leg it. Even if you're not a field shooter, you can't help but appreciate that anything we do to force ourselves to the fit of the rifle detracts from our ability to shoot it straight and true.

With all this in mind, I decided to see what it would take to set up my Air Arms Ultimate Sporter, firstly for my wife, and secondly for >>

"Notice I've said, 'improve the rifle's performance" as opposed to 'the shooter"

rifles. There could be many reasons for this, of course,. In most forms of industry and technology for example, there appears to be a natural tendency for features at first only available on top-of-the-range units, to appear later in normal, low or mid-range production models. You only have to look at motor sports, or indeed, the motor industry as a whole, to observe this effect. Whereas it is no doubt helping the trickle down of technology from high end to lower end, we think the main reason for its increasing





myself. It's fair to say that we're completely different shapes, so it will be interesting to see what adjustments will need to be made to accommodate our varying frames.

Everything in life has 'a trick to it', and setting up your rifle is no exception. Basically, the 'trick', is to do it with your eyes shut. Yup, you read that correctly - eyes shut. Let me explain; if you shoulder the rifle with your eyes open, your body will subconsciously adjust itself as the rifle drops into place. Without knowing it, you will bend yourself to fit the rifle, and you won't even know you've done it. Don't believe me? Next time you're out with your rifle, pick it up then close your eyes before putting it into the shoulder. Get yourself nice and comfortable and then open your eyes. It's a very lucky man who'll find himself

looking straight down the barrel of his scope. After opening your eyes you'll find the next thing you do is to move your head and neck, and possibly the position of the butt in your shoulder to better align yourself with the scope. You'll kid yourself that you're just getting comfortable, when in reality, you're adjusting yourself to fit the

being able to achieve precisely the same position on the next shot aren't exactly stacked in your favour. What we need to do is adjust the rifle to fit us, as opposed to the other way round.

EYES WIDE SHUT

So how do we set our rifles up, then? Well, as alluded to, we do it

"Without knowing it, you will bend yourself to fit the rifle, and you won't even know you've done it"

rifle. The net result of all this jiffling is twofold. Firstly, holding yourself in an unnatural position, just to enable you get a good sight picture will affect your ability to hold the rifle as still as you can, simply because your muscles are fighting each other to maintain stability. Secondly, the odds of you with our eyes shut, but first you must gain an understanding of how adjustable your rifle is. Fortunately for my wife and I, I have an Air Arms Ultimate Sporter, which offers a wealth of adjustment options. A simple hex bolt on the side of the butt enables the cheek piece to be raised or

lowered; similarly, hex bolts accessed through slits in the side of the butt, release a gimbal within the cheek piece itself. Freeing this gimbal permits the cheek piece to be rotated in all planes. Once in position it's then just a matter of cinching up the hex bolts to lock it in place. Peer up into the underside of the cheek piece, and you'll find a hex-bolt-retained rail that offers the option to offset the cheek piece to the left or right, or to move it forwards or backwards. Of course, like many rifles, the Ultimate Sporter also has an adjustable butt plate, which can be moved up or down on the release of a simple screw in the rear. If you need to adjust the length of the butt plate, spacers can be added or removed to reach the desired length. Not all rifles offer the degree of adjustment granted by the Ultimate Sporter,





and it's also fair to say that each manufacturer goes about it in a slightly different way, but if you do have a rifle that can be adjusted, it's well worth taking the time to see how yours works.

So with a spring in my step, and an Allen key in my hand, I set about adjusting my precious rifle to fit my wife. I should add that she's also left-handed, which in a way is good because it will show how easy it is to set up a rifle for either left- or right-handed shooters. Now, my wife is a shooter, but has never done anything like this before and wasn't particularly keen to have her picture taken. That said, a bit of persuasion, and the promise of jewellery and a shopping trip, seemed to do the trick. (I do hope

added quite a bit of height to the cheek piece, to raise Marianne's head, and following a few more tests, a little camber off to the left. With this done, Marianne was able to shoulder the rifle with her eyes shut, let the rifle drop into its natural place in her shoulder, and her cheek rested comfortably on the cheek piece. On opening her eyes, she found that, time after time, her eye was perfectly aligned with the scope, giving her a perfect sight picture.

MAN SIZE

It was now my turn. I should add that I've had this rifle for just over a year and thought it was pretty well set up for me. Now, it's reasonable to say that my face is a little 'broader' than that of my

"I should add that she's also lefthanded, which in a way is good"



that you, as readers, realise the lengths we go to, to bring you these articles).

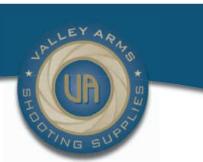
IN NEUTRAL

We started by setting all the adjustments to either a neutral or lowest setting. Marianne then shouldered the rifle, with her eyes shut, and got as comfortable as she could. On opening her eyes it was obvious that the cheek piece was way too low and the butt plate was actually half way out of her shoulder. Adjusting the butt plate is perhaps the easiest thing to do on a rifle. The method I use is to loosen it just enough so that it moves freely, and then to re-shoulder the rifle. The butt plate will then find its own position, at which point you ease it out of the shoulder and tighten it up. I then

wife's, so on repeating the same process, I got to thinking why we both had the cheek piece pretty much in line with the long axis of the rifle. A bit of experimentation showed that I was forcing my face further into the cheek piece to compensate for this. A few moments adjustment saw the cheek piece off-set to the right, enabling my face to find a much more natural and less forced position. The upshot was that I no longer had trouble obtaining a good sight picture at high magnification, because my eye was now perfectly aligned with the scope. Like many, I can now say that Airgun World has benefitted my shooting, because after writing this article, I now have my rifle set up better than it was before.



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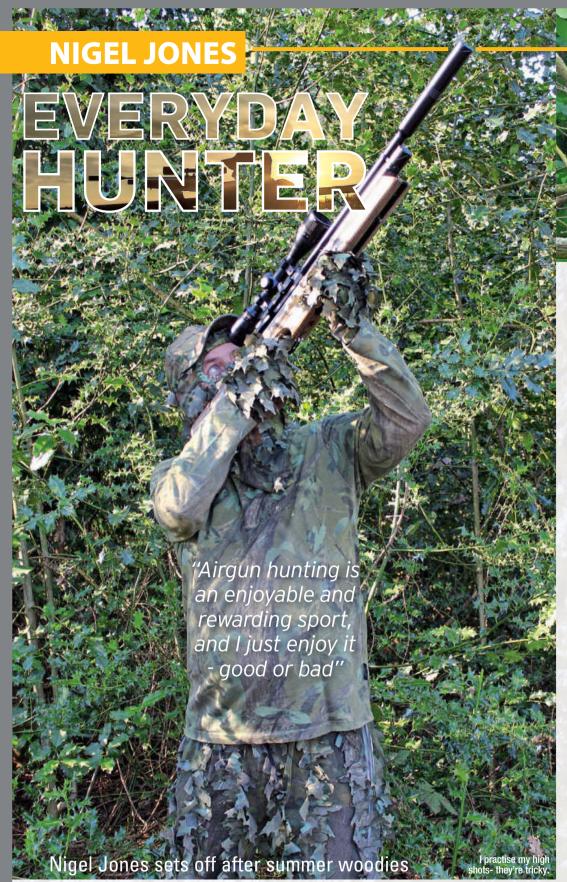












or this month's feature I thought I might as well start on the woodland in my permissions because there's quite a lot of woodpigeon activity on one of them at the moment. They seem to be travelling to and from the stubble fields to feed, and then using woodland to relax and bask

in the sun as they digest the food. So this is where I'll situate myself for this particular foray, to take a few down and thin the numbers a little. The woodland floor is quite mess, to be honest; there are droppings all over, and on, the stingers and blackberry bushes, and this is a clue to where I

should set-up and ambush to bring them down.

I enjoy days out in the woodlands. They offer an array of opportunities for the airgun hunter, plus the nice, relaxing atmosphere that's on offer. I've studied and spoken to other shooters about the topic, and we

agreed that air rifle shooting reduces stress. We all have a certain amount of stress from day to day; sometimes it can be hard with work and family issues, bills and money problems. I'm sure some of you would agree. My particular situation involves balancing my pest control work with being a carer for my mum and dad. I fetch their groceries and do all their housework twice a week, and I do my own as well not to mention the school runs and picking the missus up from work. Phew, I've just realised I'm quite a busy bee - so my hunting is a tonic that relaxes me and keeps me sane. We should all appreciate our sport, and how lucky we are to have it.

Pigeon meat is my favourte v why i'm so keen to hunt ther

I spoke to a Dutch shooter by email last week, and he told me that in Holland they're not allowed to shoot properly. There's no pest-control shooting with air rifles allowed over there, and they're left with field target and plinking on their own property, so I thank the shooting organisations that protect our sport, and our government for allowing probably one of the best and most productive pastimes that's available - period.

I've had permission for about a year and half now on this particular woodland. It's a mature wood, probably over a hundred years old and with some character, for sure. The scenery is beautiful as the sun breaks through the canopy, and the ponds are gorgeous to look at. I don't know if there will be fish present in these ponds, but if so, I'm sure it could provide some promising fishing because it's never being touched.

They are plenty of grey squirrel dreys present all over the wood, so >>



maybe I will have a chance at one or two as I'm waiting for the woodpigeons to arrive, and I want to bag a few woodies because I'm partial to the fine meat that these birds offer. Woodpigeon is my favourite of all our edible quarry species, by far, and my favoured dish is pigeon in hoisin sauce, in wraps, with finger chillies - yes I like it hot. When I visit the Midland Country Fair, you'll find me not only on the Airgun World stand, but also on my travels testing the fine, wild food that's always on offer.

and took the long walk to the woodland because the landowner hasn't given me permission to use my 4×4 on her land. I will get round to asking her one day, but I don't like being to pushy; I like to be patient and build the relationship and trust, first. As I got to the wood, I loaded my magazine with 10 Air Arms Field pellets and then slotted it into the breech. As I got my head net and gloves on, I saw a grey squirrel jumping along the fence line

toward me. It stopped about 35 yards away, probably because it had spotted me, and was trying to make out what I was, or if I was a danger. I dropped very slowly to a kneeling position, took aim on its head and let fly my little highspeed payload to its mark. Smack! The pellet struck home perfectly, sending the tree rat off its perch to the ground with a few final kicks confirming a clean head shot. What a lucky start! I'd just turned up to get ready, and had one in



the bag straight away.

LOOK UP

I didn't have to wait long for my next opportunity. A woodie was flapping his wings right above me, so I carefully moved forward to the fence and shuffled to the left a bit, to get a clean chance of a shot through the twigs. I settled my breathing with a deep breath, and then placed my cross hair above the head of the woodie. As I slowly breathed out, my aim dropped dead on target, pausing my breath with half a lung full of air as my first stage of the trigger was pressed, I crisply let fly my pellet and 'thwop!' The pellet struck home clean as the woodie dropped through the canopy, to the floor. I slowly put my rifle safely over the fence and jumped over to collect my kill.

I then got into position sitting against a fallen tree trunk to wait

SUMMER CAMO

Well, that's a bit more about me that you all know now, so let's move on to what happened this month. Firstly, English Woodland from Jack Pyke is my camouflage of choice; this pattern is a tried-and-tested camo for our British summer time, because most of our foliage is green. The gun I will be using is my Air Arms Ultimate Sporter, with my Bushnell Trophy XLT on board - now with my preferred mounts, Sportsmatch, of course; there is no other for me. So now with my equipment in order, let's see if we can bag some vermin.

I arrived at the farm gate at 1pm

ntage of any support you can find.

EVERYDAY HUNTER

for more incoming woodpigeons. The woodland floor was covered in droppings, so I was quite confident of a chance or two, but it wasn't the woodles that showed up - it was the grey squirrels. I was sitting in the middle of three dreys, so I waited patiently for the chance as a tree rat moved slowly through the trees. A chance came after about two or three minutes, when the squirrel sat just long enough for me to take aim and send it tumbling to the floor, with a well-placed shot to the head.

MIXED BAG

It was the woodies I was out for, but I do plan my forays all the time, and I'd previously logged a reference that there could be a chance or two of squirrels in that area. I comb my permissions top to bottom to find out what's where and when, and log it down, spending just as much time out there without the rifle, planning rigorously. This is probably one of the reasons why I bag up most of the time, so follow my lead and you won't go wrong, I assure you.

Now with a mixed bag building, I added a further three squirrels and two woodies, from my location



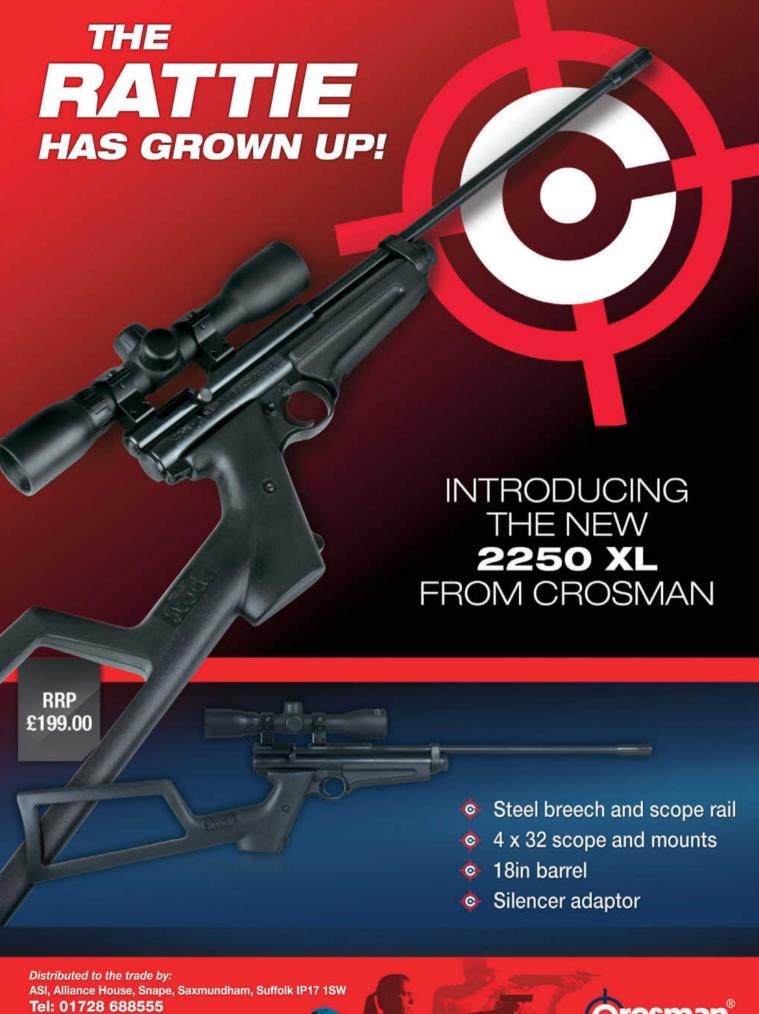
by the fallen tree, so I decided to try another position in order to get a few more opportunities. I waited quite a long time for my next chance to present itself, a little frustrated, but happy with how my foray was going. Sometimes I do well, other times I have to work hard, and on rare occasions I don't get anything at all. Airgun hunting is an enjoyable and rewarding sport and I just enjoy it, good or bad. So what I'm trying to

say here is, don't take things too seriously; just enjoy being out and take your chances when they present themselves. That's exactly what I did with my next opportunity. Yet another tree rat was jumping across the boughs above me, and I quickly clicked my tongue to try to stop it in its tracks. The squirrel stopped dead, and looked straight down at me. By then, I had my cross hair between its eyes, slowly took up

the first stage of the Ultimate
Sporter's excellent trigger, and
pressed through the second stage,
releasing a pellet to its destination.
The pellet struck home sweetly
and sent the squirrel tumbling to
the floor, stone dead. Over the
next few hours, I managed
another four tree rats to the game
bag, and I was well happy. My
woodland session had been a
delightful day's sport. I wish you all
happy hunting.







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GOLT.45STRIP

Peter Pritchard rebuilds his new Colt .45 for no good reason at all



"Make a diagram of the side plate on a piece of card and put the screws in"

n the interest of science, and because I was bored, I decided to strip my Colt SAA and take pictures for anyone who has an interest in the inner workings. There were a couple of surprises inside, especially the valve unit, which is novel and very clever. So, revolver on the bench, left side uppermost, screwdriver at the



The hammer spring is quite delicate so handle it carefully.

ready, let's begin.

Make sure that there is no Co2 in the pistol, and the shells are removed. Begin by removing the six small crosshead screws that hold down the left side of the

Make a diagram of the side plate on a piece of card and put the screws in to the card - in



The holes it fits into are quite shallow.



Please be sure to use a screwdriver that fits the screw heads well. If not, it will slip and cause damge that will ruin the pistol's looks.



Use a plastic lever to lift the side plate, not a metal one.

order, because they are not all the same length.

Carefully lift off the side plate and hope that nothing is disturbed beneath; the cylinder pawl spring is the one that may dislodge itself, so take a note of the correct fitment of the various parts.

Note: in the picture, the pointer is facing toward the valve stem. which upon firing is struck by the raised hump at the BASE of the hammer - very unusual, that. Also,



The safety is cleverly hidden under the frame.



Note the position of the link carefully for refitting.

take note of the pawl spring and trigger spring, and how they are fitted

CAREFULLY DOES IT

Carefully disengage and lift out the pawl spring. You can then either lift the pawl off the hammer, or leave it where it is and lift out the hammer and pawl together, as I

Below the hammer, in the frame, is the hammer spring,



The cylinder stop holds the chamber in correct alignment with the barrel.

>>

UMAREX BOYS CLUB



The valve unit is the heart of the

which is also unusual in that it appears to be fitted upside down. i.e. The long leg is not fitted into a hole in the hammer, as you would expect. Note that both long and short legs of the hammer spring fit into recesses in the frame.

The long leg is uppermost. Just ease the tension on the long leg of the hammer spring, with a small screwdriver, and ease it out of its recess in the frame, then lift the

Now lift out the safety catch, to reveal the cylinder stop and its spring. You can remove these next, or leave them be, as I did. Cylinder stop and spring revealed.

THE VALVE UNIT

You will notice that the valve unit is at the bottom of the frame, and has a long extension that goes all the way up to the top. To remove the valve unit, undo and remove



I've never seen a gas path quite like this one

that when you remove your valve the seal may stick to the valve, rather than stay in the frame.

This channel and seal is where the gas flows from, once the valve stem is struck open by the base of the hammer upon firing. The gas exits at the top of the channel behind the shell, and the rubber seal in each shell seals against gas leakage upon firing, so make sure your shell seals are in good order. The valve unit is out of the revolver and flipped over to reveal the gas channel.

CLEVER STUFF, GUYS

Only when the valve unit is out can you safely lift out the cylinder, but first you must depress the top of the cylinder latch, if you left it in the frame. If you don't depress the cylinder latch away from the cylinder, when you lift the cylinder out the latch, its spring will fly out

"Every part comes out without any effort and should go back in the same way"

the four screws, which are all the same length. With the screws removed, just lift up the valve unit and out of the frame. You will notice a long, curved channel in the frame once the valve unit is lifted. This has a silicone seal in a groove around it; you can see this in the pic, although it is possible

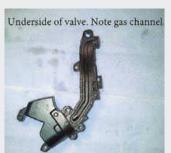
across your workshop never to be seen again.

The valve unit holds the cylinder and its pivot pin in the frame, and it also holds the loading gate on the opposite side. The loading gate has a small spring and ball bearing to keep it either open or closed - do not lose either of these



Only minimal lubrication is needed This little ball detent keeps the loading gate shut. on reassembly.





Inspect every part for contamination and wear.

two components. See pic for location of the spring and ball. The spring and ball are fiddly to refit, so I suggest a blob of grease to hold them in place. It is then necessary to pop the loading gate back into its recess in the frame and to hold it in place whilst you flip the frame over. Then still holding the loading gate in place



This tiny spring could easily be lost, so put it somewhere safe.

Just remember, the pin securing the barrel to the frame is splined at the one end, so with the pistol in the 'aim' position, the pin drifts out from left to right. Don't forget the screw holding the ejector shroud at the front, near the

Reassemble in reverse order, and do not force anything in.

"Below the hammer, in the frame, is the hammer spring, which is also unusual in that it appears to be fitted upside down"

- and to the rear - pop the valve unit back into the frame, and hold it down with a spare digit whilst you put the valve screws back in. Refer to the earlier picture so that you fit the screws in their correct holes. Note the spring for the loading gate; the ball is on the other end of the spring pressing against the loading gate. Now the loading gate is out, you will see the notch in it, which is where the edge of the valve unit fits to hold the loading gate in place.

That pretty much covers the extent of the strip down. I have not removed the barrel and eiector shroud because, most probably, that will never be required. If it does, then I am sure, if you have gone this far, the removal of the barrel will be self-explanatory.

Every part comes out without any effort and should go back in the same way. When reinserting the hammer into the frame, pop it on its pivot post, and then whilst pushing it down, push it forward as well. This will ensure that the raised lug on the underside of the hammer engages in front of the hammer spring. If you don't do this, you will not be able to fit the side plate. Also when reinserting the small screws, pop each screw in its hole and try reversing the screwdriver a touch before screwing them back in, that way vou will not cross-thread them. Any questions, you can contact me through the Umarex Bovs Club forum, and if you haven't joined, then come on in.







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Antonio Lembo tells us why he loves the good old spring gun

ertainly in the UK, the ✓ spring-powered airgun will outnumber any other power plant. With the modern era, pre-charged pneumatic design being launched to the general public, and gaining in popularity through the 1980s and '90s, it would be easy to assume that the springer was the older design of the two. However, in reality, the pre-charged airgun pre-dates the spring piston design by a margin measured in hundreds of years. However, my aim (sic!) here is not to recount airgun history, although it is immensely interesting, and many references can be found on the Internet or in books, but to explain why so many shooters, me among them, love the simple, timeless design of the classic springer.

The springer comes in many shapes and sizes and is offered at varying price points. So we have basic, junior, lightweight designs which have launched the shooting careers of so many. Some of these people may later move on to other designs, whereas others will remain loyal to the springer concept and move up to more sophisticated, more accurate and powerful designs.

Ease of use is one of the big advantages of the springer,

especially the break-barrel models. Open the barrel and cock the action; insert pellet - all the time holding the barrel; return barrel to the closed position, knock the safety off, if fitted, and fire. Simples. Once a youngster has had his/her first shot, they'll be hooked, and much of that

multi-stroke designs, the shooter provides the energy that drives the pellet. In the pneumatic designs, pre-compressed air is stored, ready to be released by a valve, but with the gas-ram and spring-powered guns, the piston still has all the work to do upon squeezing the trigger. The piston

feel, the sense that something mechanical and more intimate is occurring, and the shooter feels a far greater sense of attachment to the gun and its power production. You feel more connected to the whole experience, having invested energy into the system - and you have to keep investing, all the way through the entire firing cycle, making the springer the most

"paying proper attention to the correct technique with the spring gun hones their skills"

appeal is due to the very tactile feel of the springer.

HUMAN POWERED

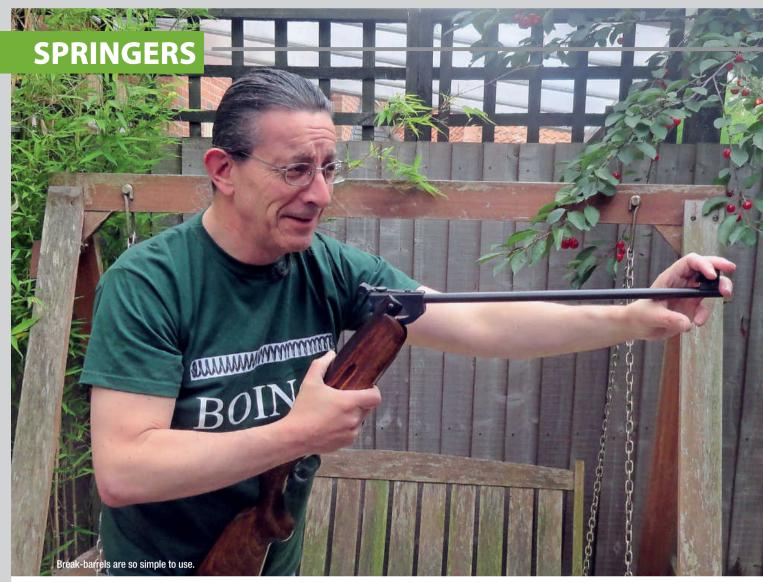
With the springer, gas-rams and pump-up designs, both single and

is driven forward, compressing the air, which is then forced through a transfer port into the breech. Once sufficient pressure has been achieved, the pellet is sent on its way up the barrel. This very tactile

involving type of all airgun designs.

The springer appears, outwardly at least, such a simple design of few components, which is why they hold so much appeal for so many. Most springers can be





dismantled and serviced easily by the home enthusiast, using simple, everyday hand tools; some in just a few minutes, but this simplicity also belies the complicated science involved in making them more efficient and more user-friendly; which is the 'black art' of springer tuning.

SO ACCURATE

Some of the springers tuned by professional tuning firms, or by the ever-growing band of home 'shed-tuners' are capable of quite astonishing levels of refinement and precision at extreme ranges. Many of these are full-power (11+ ft.lbs) sporting rifles, boasting an uncanny degree of efficiency, and are objects of stunning and impeccable manners and with accuracy to match recoilless designs. Even many untuned 'budget' springers can return shot-to-shot consistency readings in single figures. This may not be that crucial to accuracy, but it certainly helps to instil even more

"so many shooters, me among them, love the simple, timeless design of the classic springer"

confidence for the shooter.

For many owners, the appeal lies in the pure simplicity of design and operation. Basic, no frills rifles and pistols used for close-range, open-sighted, tin can mangling; guns that provide hours and hours of endless, simple fun, and can keep providing this fun factor for years on end, with little or no maintenance, due to the simple, robust design.

There will be countless rifles out there that have put meat in the pot, and accounted for countless head of vermin for many years without ever having a service or refresh. No doubt, these rifles would benefit from a service, but the fact is, they keep performing their duties with no protest, bearing testimony to the rugged design.

The appeal of the springer is spread among a large number of different shooters and guns from

varying price points. So, whether the gun's to be used for hunting, field target, HFT, bell target, paper target, informal target, plinking, tinkering or collecting, this charismatic power plant intrigues so many. A perfectly usable gun can often be found for as little as £40, and can also run into many hundreds for the finely-tuned, custom-stocked examples. There really is a gun for everyone with the springer design.

NOT WHAT YOU THINK

It is often said that a spring gun is harder to shoot accurately than a recoilless, pneumatic design. In a few cases, the reverse is actually

true, and I have met many shooters who can shoot more accurately with a springer for offhand standing shots. However, generally, the springer is less tolerant and more punishing of less-than-perfect technique. For many, though, this is part of the attraction. It represents more of a challenge. Your technique has to be repeatable and consistent. For this reason, some top PCP shooters actually keep a springer in their armoury to keep them honest. If their scores suffer with the PCP, paying proper attention to the correct technique with the spring gun hones their skills.

The sheer character and tactility





of the spring piston airgun are the main attractions for me and many other springer fans, along with the self-contained, simple and robust nature. They can be as simple or high-tech as the owner wants them to be, and for many, nothing beats the 'back to basics' appeal of a lightweight, break-barrel springer, open sights and a pocketful of pellets. Nice, simple, plain, good old-fashioned fun.

When you've done, your trusty little friend asks for nothing more than a wipe down with an oily cloth and the odd, very occasional drop of oil on a linkage or pin. Many might not see regular use, but the springer is always ready and willing to offer up sterling, long-term service, whether it's been stored for weeks or even years. The springer will not mind how long it has been since its last outing - just don't forget to give it an airing when you can! To the many thousands of

committed spring-gun fans, I salute you. You already know and 'get' the buzz. To those who don't own a spring gun yet, I implore you to get your hands on one. You may, or may not, become a convert overnight, but variety is the spice of life. Owning one type of gun doesn't have to be to the exclusion of others. This charming and characterful system will add an extra dimension and more fun to your shooting - and that's a promise. So come along and feel the power of The Boing!









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YOUR AIRGUNS

READERS' Regular reader Stewart with. I asked plenty of questions via email, which were answered the same day, and as I'm new to dream sporter with PCP world, when I called him dream sporter



"you need an airgun that gives you confidence, and that's how I feel when I'm hunting with this"

ike many airgunners, this is my second spell at this sport, and in the last 12 months, I've bought a few airguns for myself, and my son, including the RAW HM 1000. As a lefty, I had a 'wish list' for my perfect airgun; a high shot count, a full left-hand stock, left-hand side lever cocking, an adjustable butt pad, .20 calibre, and with a free-floating barrel, so I was over the moon to find an airgun with everything I wanted, straight out of the box. There should be no need to improve a new airgun when the

manufacturers spend a fortune on research, and putting the gun through its paces, so the end product is their best for market.

LOAD UP

There is a 12-shot magazine, and the option to single-load if required. When the gun is cocked there is a scooped-out area to make single loading easy, if you wish, and the filling procedure is just as simple because the probe is at the top of the bottle for easy access. I did some research on

the HM 1000 airgun, and I do see a difference from my HW100, where the fill probe is at the top of the bottle, not underneath, and the bottle and silencer seem closer together.

This airgun has a hunting look, and that is what I wanted; clean lines and easy to wipe down on a rainy day. The side lever cocking is on the correct side for a lefty, and smooth, with a firm lock when returned to the firing position. The safety is in front of the trigger and has a secure feel, which is what you want for a hunting airgun, and I didn't have to adjust the two-stage trigger because it suited me very well, straight from the box. Setting up my airgun was a pleasure. The solid build quality, and the adjustable butt pad just made me feel as if the gun was made for me, and being able to shoot at a target and cock the gun, without any head movement, was a delight; also, when taking kneeling or standing shots, my hand is on the stock not the bottle so maybe the stock is longer.

I have put about 1000 .20 H & N FTT, and Daystate Li pellets through my gun, and can honestly say that I haven't had any problems out to 35m, which is my hunting range, but I will try to find the best one, and even though I'm



each pellet type at 35m. Power is 11.4 ft.lbs. with Daystate Li pellets.

I ordered my airgun from Michael Tawn Airgun Supplies, and he was a pleasure to deal the PCP world, when I called him he helped me with recommendations, how to look after my airgun, told me about the harmonics of the gun and bipod positioning, and so on. Michael Tawn is a really helpful man, and offers great aftersales care.

NOT CHEAP

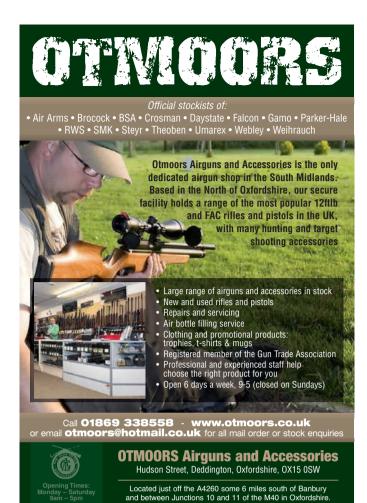
My HM1000 retailed at £1,199 for the standard version, and to my amazement, £1,199 for a full, left-hand version - being a lefty usually costs more! This airgun is a pleasure to shoot. It is no lightweight, but if I can shoot tight groups with it, then anyone can! I have a Hawke scope with medium mounts and a Harris bipod fitted now. When hunting, you need an airgun that gives you confidence, and that's how I feel when I'm hunting with this airgun. I'm even feeling confident enough to give HFT a try soon; the gun is perfectly capable - it will be me that needs to practise.

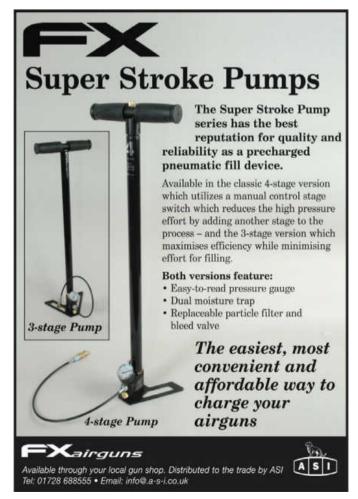
SMALL CHANGES

If I could change anything about the HM 1000, it would be just two small things; It would be nice if it couldn't be double-loaded, and it could be a bit lighter - but that's my problem, not the gun's, because I'm skinny











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9



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BACKTOTHE



It's been a while since I've been this excited. In fact, it's been well over 20 years. The reason? We've just moved home from living above a busy pub in the city of Peterborough, to a rather quaint, isolated farmhouse in Lincolnshire, surrounded by fields and as much wildlife as I've seen anywhere in the UK.

The first thing I did, after unloading the two lorries full of 'junk' into our new home, was open my gun case – something I hadn't done for nearly four years. I

was horrified by what I saw; the barrel and breech of my beloved Theoben Evolution was covered in rust. I was absolutely devastated. Leaving a rifle in a damp garage wasn't the best of ideas, but at the time I had nowhere to shoot locally and I didn't even have a garden to play in. I really had no idea of the amount of damage that could be done to a rifle from a simple case of neglect.

Luckily, I'm very good friends with a retired Met. Police firearms instructor, and he very kindly took my rifle away, and returned it to me, after a rather extensive overhaul, in a far better state.

SON OF ROSIE

I've been shooting for most of my life, on and off. Do you recognise the surname? Yes, that's right, I am 'son of' Rosie Barham. In a rather quirky twist of fate, the roles have now been reversed, and whereas I was the main source of inspiration for my mother's writing while I was growing up and shooting everything in sight, she is

now the main source of inspiration for me getting back into airgunning.

Moving to the countryside with no end of plump woodpigeons - and even partridge - in my back garden, plus fields full of rabbits within 200 yards of the new home, I'm now inspired to shoot and cook some of the fabulous recipes from Rosie's latest best-selling book, 'Delicious Vermin!'. You can't beat free-range food, and having tasted most of the recipes held within the book's pages, I

FUTURE

"I felt my heart racing as shot after shot grouped up within two inches"



garden and found myself a rather convenient wall to drop a cushion on to use as a rest. It was as if the wall had been purpose-built for me, being the perfect height for a good, solid stance, and amazingly, it is exactly 30-yards from my new 'backstop' wall at the other end of the garden!

My plan was to zero a new scope in at 30 yards – a safe and comfortable distance for most airgun enthusiasts who are planning on shooting game.



I fashioned a makeshift target out of a cardboard box full of corrugated cardboard, to help slow or even stop the pellets before they reached the wall, then proceeded to put ten shots through the rifle to see roughly

where she was firing and how consistent she was.

I wasn't impressed. The consistency and accuracy were all over the place. I then realised that the tin of Eley Wasp pellets that I was using had been inside the gun case with the rifle, and they, too, had suffered for three damp winters in the garage. Maybe, I should have sussed that when I had one hell of a job opening the rusted tin lid. I really don't know if these conditions can affect pellets in such a way - that one will have to be put out to one of the Airgun World team - but it certainly seemed so with this particular ammo.

With that tin of pellets safely disposed of, I opened a tin of Crossman Accupells that had been sitting in a drawer in my office, and the difference was instantly observed. I felt my heart racing as shot after shot grouped up within two inches. I now knew that there was nothing wrong with my rifle; it was just a case of taking the caps off the scope and spending a little time zeroing in. I can't begin to tell you how relieved I was to see those pellet holes forming so close together.



think I owe it to my mum and my family to give them all a go myself.

However, having not shot any game for nearly four years, and considering the state of my neglected gun, I thought I'd better get down to a week of intense training before I went back out in the field to collect our dinner!

THE PERFECT RANGE

With my newly-refurbed rifle in hand, I ventured into the back





ZEROING TIPS

1 The first thing to do is find a safe place to shoot. Make sure that if your pellets miss their target, no people, animals or property will be damaged. This is particularly important for first-time shooters who may be more prone to missing shots, or shooting 'stray pellets'.

2 Ensure that you have a good, safe backstop to mount your target on. It could be a bale of hay, a piece of cheap plywood, a proper pellet trap, or something that you make yourself such as a cardboard box filled with paper.

If you do make your own backstop, test it under safe conditions to make sure that it will stop the pellet. Just because you think that a particular material will stop a pellet doesn't mean that it will!

3 The easiest way to zero a scope is to start at a distance of ten leet (yes, that close). Shoot one shot with the sights centred on the buil's eye. Look at where the shot hit. If the shot is too high or too low, or to the right or to the left, adjust the sights accordingly.

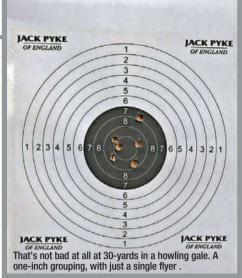
4 Make small changes at first until you get a feel for how changes in the sight settings affect the point of impact. The windage adjustment changes where pellets hit from side to side, and the elevation knob adjusts the height. Continue making shots and changes until your pellets are centred, and are hitting the target about two-inches below the bull's-eye.

Now you can move back to 20 or 30 yards and shoot again. Your next shot should hit like target just about centre. All you need to do now is line-tune the windage, and adjust the elevation so your shots hit the centre of the buil's-eye.

" it was when I began hitting my mark shot after shot, that all my childhood memories came flooding back to me"

HUNTING





GROUND ZERO

The first job was to get my left-to-right axis sorted. The gun was shooting to the right, so I gave the bezel on the scope a good half-a-dozen clicks to the left and rattled off three shots. That sent the grouping about an inch left, but I needed another inch, so again, I gave the bezel six clicks to the left. This time the three shots were very close to centre, and just one click later I was satisfied that I was on the money.

Now it was time for the vertical axis. I was shooting about an inch-and-a-half high, so by using the formula of six clicks per inch, I gave the top bezel on the scope nine clicks down. Three shots later and I was two clicks away from the bull's-eye!

It was at this point, when I

began hitting my mark shot after shot, that all my childhood memories came flooding back to me. I was literally like a little kid in a sweet shop. My heart was pounding, I was almost trembling with excitement, and I had the widest grin on my face.

My thoughts drifted back to when I shot my first airgun, a truly wonderful Webley Eclipse that my mum had ever so kindly bought me (after months of continuous nagging). I remembered zeroing that rifle with a Nikko Sterling Silver Crown 3-9 x 40 scope, and after hitting the bull's-eye several times, placing my toy soldiers, matchboxes, clothes pegs and anything else I could find at the end of the garden in front of a plywood backstop that my mum had also bought - I must have cost

her a fortune that summer.

In a moment of nostalgia-driven euphoria, I ran upstairs to my youngest daughter's bedroom and 'borrowed' a couple of her yellow Kinder Egg inners (she's got loads, and I knew she wouldn't miss a couple). Now I really was reliving my youth, and I chuckled to myself as I bounced the little yellow 'targets' around the back garden with every shot. I got so carried away that I even let out a little "Yeah!" by accident.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

I've always been a confident shooter, both when I was younger and did an awful lot of rough shooting with my airguns, and as I got older and took to the odd day out with my friend and his

12-gauge shotguns.

I felt a little bit rusty - although nowhere near as rusty as my gun had been - I decided to spend an entire week practising on a myriad targets that I had set up in my new-found, 'rootin', tootin', shootin' gallery'. I wanted to be absolutely certain that a) my rifle and new scope were going to hold zero, and b) that I was up to the job of taking down a rabbit or pigeon with complete confidence.

I spent around ten minutes, a couple of times a day, shooting from the wall. Then moved to a sitting position, and then a prone position. I shot at ground level, I shot up into the trees, and finally, I shot from the bathroom window at a 45-degree angle downwards. I covered all bases for every possible situation that I would

"I really had no idea about the amount of damage that could be done to a rifle from a simple case of neglect"





encounter out in the field, and, as the week went on, I got more and more confident about my ability. I guess it's like riding a bike - once you've spent a few years shooting consistently, it really doesn't take that long to get it all back.

I went from shooting 20 or 30 pellets a day, to well over 100 by day four. I was well and truly back on form and loving every second of it. I even resisted the temptation to take down a couple of pigeons that flew into the trees while I was practising! That took a lot of self-control, I can tell you, but at the same time it was really good to know that these birds were not

fazed by the constant 'thwack' of my rifle.

FAMILY FUN

On the Saturday, I had my two young daughters stay over for the weekend, and my eldest, Mia (aged 7), saw my gun case and asked me what it was. I took the opportunity to spend half an hour with her to teach her the rules of air rifle shooting, and she took to it far better than I could ever have wished.

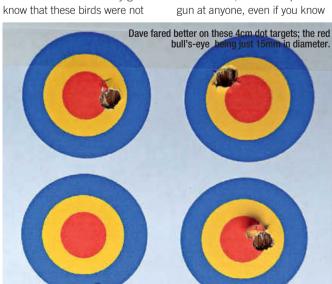
After explaining what the rifle was and how it works, I moved on to the basics, like 'never point a gun at anyone, even if you know

"Mia was shooting from 12 yards, but she managed a decent group and even hit a bull's-eye!"

it's not loaded', and 'always ensure that the safety is on', then I allowed her to have six shots. Mia was shooting from 12 yards, but she managed a decent grouping and even hit a bull's-eye! I was totally gutted and extremely proud at the same time – my daughter can shoot better than me, and she's never even seen a rifle before! I'm sure you'll be reading more of our shooting exploits

together, later in this series if I can keep her interest going, which I really can't see being a problem – she loved every minute of her 'grown-up, Daddy time'.

So, after seven days of training I was now confident enough to go for my first kill, but I'll leave that until next month's mag, when you'll discover how I fared and whether we ate like kings, or I had to go to the Co-op!

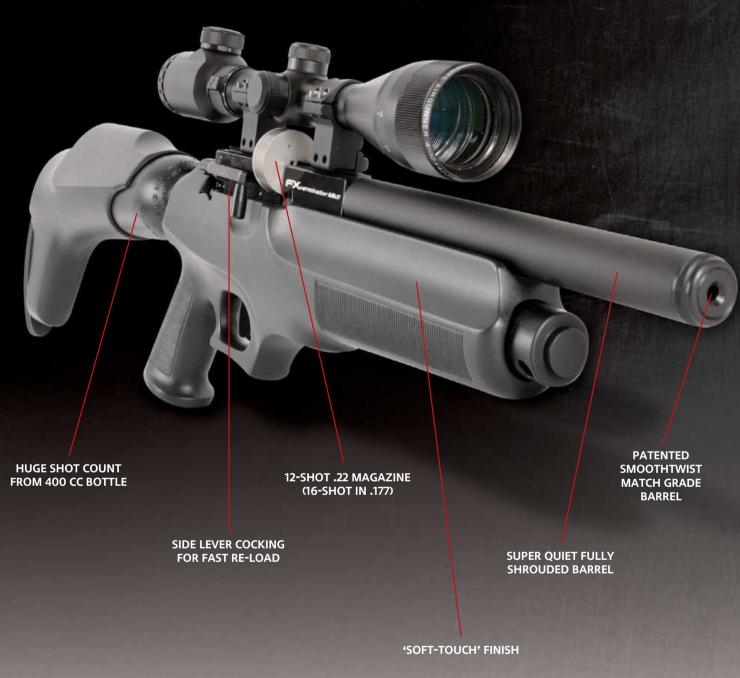




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George Lincoln Jeffries demonstrates his Lincoln air rifle in this early BSA booklet.

THE LURE OLD AIRGUNS

By John Milewski tells us why he loves his classic airguns



ven though I have enjoyed

Competing in FT, HFT and

my overwhelming passion has

been for older airguns. There is

something special about hitting

maintained my interest for the last

other century-old products can still

be used for the purpose for which

Do you remember those feelings

experienced at Christmas when

of anticipation you may have

the mark with a 100-year-old

37 years. After all, how many

they were originally made?

ARMS FAIRS

airgun, and doing so has

those 'Christmas Eve butterflies' the night before an arms fair. 10-metre match air pistol events Perhaps I have never really grown during my shooting career to date, up, but knowing this does not help me sleep, nor does it rid me of the sheer excitement a large fair brings. I have found myself

walking the dog at 3am to help the

beaten some dealers to fairs in the

past, when I've arrived before they had started to set up! The early bird catches the worm, so the saying goes, and I

night pass quicker, and have

did just that at a recent fair, when I found a 1929 BSA underlever with a factory-fitted aperture sight and clear etched markings to the air cylinder. I could hardly wait to take the rifle to the range and she

shot as accurately as she looked, when I placed four out of five shots through a 1/2-inch bell target aperture, after zeroing. That recent acquisition was worth all the anticipation, and whilst

I may not compete for trophies that often these days, finding that rifle was as satisfying as placing the highest score in open

competition.

in more than one throat when organising charity activities. He is always the first to indulge in banter with members old and new and creates just the right atmosphere as soon as he arrives.

Another club that stands out is Meon Valley Airgun Club. They once described themselves as a social club that happens to shoot, and that is just what they were, initially. Then they started winning

"There is something special about hitting the mark with a 100-yearold airgun"

CLUB MEMBERSHIP

I have been a member of three airgun clubs during my shooting career, and have visited countless others. In all of them, I've found members who are willing to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. Club officials, such as Andy Draper at Bisley, are worth their weight in lead pellets. Andy has organised themed shoots single-handed, and placed a lump at HFT and took things a little more seriously. I'll always remember my late friend, Ron Hayler, offering one of his vintage relics to anyone who wanted to shoot at their long-range target. Ron was very generous that way, and you never knew which pellets he would give you either. More often than not they were a selection of several different brands.

Airgun clubs play a vital role in >>>





CLASSIC AIRGUNS



providing an opening into the airgun world, and whilst taking that first step through the gate as a newbie is the hardest, it is rarely regretted. You are never too old to learn and I often come away from a range session much wiser than when I went into it. If you ask nicely, you get to play with a vast selection of other members' guns too.

MY BSA CLUB STANDARD

Shooting alongside club mates beats solitary testing, and when I compete in competitions, an accurate and reliable rifle is a necessity. The editor has said this

before, and he's right when he describes many of us as 'airgun tarts'. We all like to shoot a gun that we find good-looking, and there are lots of different guns out there to satisfy all of us. Now, while I find the simplistic form of the BSA incredibly attractive and purposeful, I appreciate it may seem ugly to someone else, but each to their own. The BSA has a stock, air chamber, and barrel, with no frills and even has a trigger guard. More importantly, the BSA can place all of its pellets into a three-eighths of an-inch aperture at six yards. What more do you need?



"The extra power of the rifle results in a flatter trajectory"

My rifle of choice is the .177 BSA Club Standard, or CS as it is known to collectors. This model was only made between late 1922 and 1930, roughly in a ratio of 1 in 7 when compared to the .22 BSA Standard. What makes the CS so special is its long cylinder combined with the smaller calibre. The extra power of the rifle results in a flatter trajectory and a rifle that can be used competitively on the bell target range, as well as on more distant targets in Vintage

HFT. The CS can take a little effort to 'tune' because the correct gauge spring is a must, but the results are well worth it. I have somehow acquired four of them, but tend to use the one with least finish, on the basis that I don't mind shooting her in the rain or handling her with sweaty fingers. She has rewarded my loyalty on many an occasion by achieving the highest score of the day.

MY WEBLEY MARK 3

Like many collectors, my current favourite item is the one I most recently bought. When I'm not testing a vintage airgun or competing, the newest is the one I tend to take to the range until the next one comes along. Therefore, a rifle has to be fairly special if it is to remain a constant range companion many years after it was acquired. One of my Webley Mark 3s is such a rifle. With original factory-fitted sling swivels and Parker Hale aperture sight, my rifle is incredibly accurate and smooth to shoot. The Mark 3 is too new to use in vintage competitions at my club, but for sheer pleasure of open sight shooting, that Webley takes some beating.

ACCESSORISE

Contemporary accessories that accompany an airgun, or those that can be tracked down later, can be as interesting as the gun to an addict, I mean enthusiast, like me. Finding a long-lost BSA





instruction booklet from a century ago is a lot harder than tracking down the gun itself, so you can imagine my joy when I successfully bid on a 1905 BSA

rifle. Shortly afterwards, BSA re-took the photographs and pictured one of their own employees, so the early booklet is like gold dust to a devotee of the

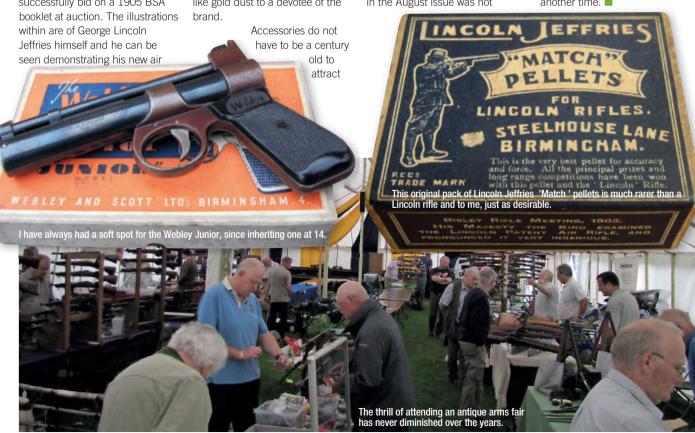
interest, and it can be immensely satisfying to put together a themed modern set. For example, buying the Umarex Peacemaker I tested in the August issue was not

enough. Spare

Magazine online) along with a replica box for Colt cartridges, which was styled after the original. The box is useful for keeping shells, spare Co2, and ball ammo, in one place, as well as making the revolver look more authentic when on display in my gunroom.

WE HAVE A LONG AND **PROUD HISTORY**

As well as collecting airguns, I have a huge interest in learning about their history, and of shooters who have gone before. For example, there is a recorded instance of three poor youngsters from Islington contributing a penny each to make up the thruppence entry fee for a 1928 competition. They then tossed a coin to decide who would shoot in the sweepstake. As for the outcome, well that's a story for another time.



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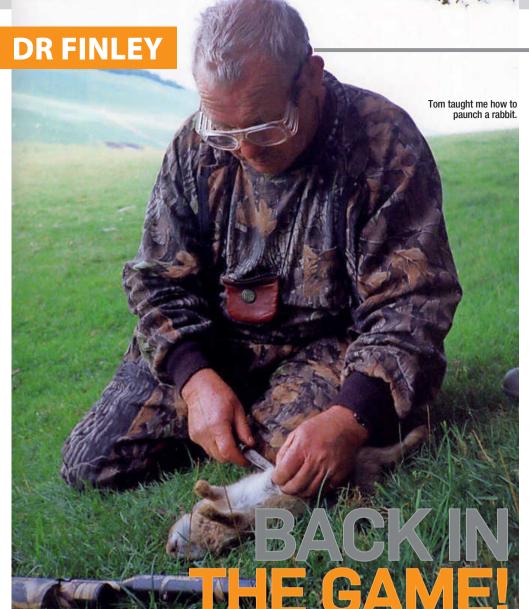






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make perfect zeroing targets because they are small and reactive - just make sure they are on soft ground and check the area behind the shot.

LAMPING

It was with Tom that I perfected shooting under the lamp. Tom is a master of the lamp and can stop most rabbits dead in their tracks for that few seconds needed to take the shot. He also provides very humorous moments; when one particular rabbit would not stop, he set off running after it, leaving me behind. So determined was he to stop the furry tough guy, that he forgot I needed to be next to him to take the shot. I was laughing so much that I couldn't walk, let alone shoot or run after him.

On our many trips to Scotland, Tom was the steady hand, once again. He proved time and again that age is no factor in hunting skills, and he showed me how to cook fresh rabbits' livers in crushed garlic - I have never tasted anything like his 'just shot' rabbit livers flash-cooked in a pan in the open air, over a gas camping stove. He was very particular about the rabbits he took the livers from - half to three-quarters grown only - to

Tim Finley shares shooting memories of his old pal Tom Tom's steady hand that guided

When we arrived back at Casa del Walton, we got to talking about our shooting journey. Tom had been in the Korean War in a mortar platoon, but had only

Tom's steady hand that guided our practice over there, and we did quite well. We were fazed at first by the heat, and the flattened trajectory of our guns, but Tom knew that the dry hot air was giving our pellets a helping hand,

"He proved time and again that age is no factor in hunting skills"

dabbled with shotguns since getting out. It was in the late 1980s when he saw the growing FT scene as a perfect hobby, and never looked back. I met Tom as a member of Anston FTC, my second FT club. He went about setting up his FT rigs in a very methodical manner; as a compressed-air engineer he had to be precise. We went to America in 1991 to take part in the International FT shoot, which was a fantastic experience, and it was

so we compensated accordingly.

It was Tom who taught me to hunt. I could shoot targets, but hunting is a different ball game. Yes, one shot counts in FT, but it's even more important to make that one shot count when attempting to take the life of a living creature. He was a great believer in checking our hunting rifles' zero before getting near any quarry - a code of practice I follow today. Clumps of dirt and fallen nuts/ berries from trees and bushes





ensure the perfect texture. Contrary to the photo, though, he did not use lard.

Tom taught me the best way to prepare a rabbit, and always, always to empty its bladder before putting it in your pocket when out in the field, smelling of rabbit urine is no way to gain friends and influence people - the rabbits do not take to it, either. Making a small cut, then in with the thumbs to open, and shaking out the intestines and stomach by holding the front and back legs, was also

makes it very secure, and it's easy to carry loads of rabbits. Just remember to test the stock for strength before loading up, and have the same number of rabbits on each end of the stick to keep it balanced.

BRANCHERS

He took me branching a few times, too. This is a real pestcontrol job, and hard work. He would not do it year on year on the same nests, though, only when the farmer got a bee in his bonnet

"He was a great believer in checking our rifles' zero before getting near any quarry"

his way. Paunching them out in the field, before you have to carry them any distance, is always a good idea, too. He showed me how to carry them with a stick by hooking the back legs together and hooking them over. You cut between the sinew and bone on one of the back legs and shove the other through that hole. This

about the birds in each nesting wood. He made me use a multi-shot .177 air rifle because that's what is needed in such shooting. With head-shots only, you need the accuracy and the multi-shot facility because they bob up and down below the rim, so a quick back-up shot to hand proves vital when branching. It





was Tom who put me on to .22 sub 12 ft.lbs. for feral pigeon control in farm buildings - and he was right! The pellet stays in the bird and does not carry on through to damage the sometimes, fragile roofs of outbuildings. The short range within the buildings, means that

the .22 looping trajectory, compared to a flatter flying .177, is not disadvantaged.

Tom was best man at my wedding so that also says a lot. Everyone needs a role model, someone to look up to, and Tom is that person - and that shooter - for me.





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"when he asked me to come up and rid his land of a biblical plague of crows, I was more than happy to accept"

couldn't help but chuckle when I read a contribution on the letters page recently, about how Airgun World writers all seem to come home after every shoot with enough game in the bag to feed a small village for a month. Trust me, even shooters like Phil Hardman, for whom hunting is a way of life, have plenty of days where the pickings are slim indeed, and still others when the bag remains resolutely empty. It shouldn't matter; if every hunting or fishing trip resulted in a lorry load of bunnies or salmon, a big part of the experience - the uncertainty - would be lost, and your sport would be all the poorer.

That's what I told myself two months ago when I was asked to clear out feral pigeons from a cement works, and that's what I'm telling myself again today, after a visit to a game bird hatchery in the Scottish Borders. I am indebted to the owner, who helped me to acquire a fantastic permission from an upland sheep farmer close to my home, so when he asked me to come up and rid his land of a biblical plague of crows, I

was more than happy to accept.

TOO HOT

When the agreed day arrived, it was stupidly hot, and I considered rescheduling; when it comes to shooting, give me a crisp winter's morning over high summer, every time. The atmosphere grew increasingly oppressive and humid the further up the A68 I travelled. and by the time I arrived, the air was utterly still and the heat was formidable. The simple act of getting my gear out of the boot and walking 50 yards to the Portakabin office left me sweating, and wishing I was at home in the garden with an ice-cold beer.

The hatchery produces thousands of cage-reared game birds of various types, depending on the time of year, and on the day of my visit, there were countless juvenile mallards and pheasants in huge cages, across a few dozen acres of land. Far away from any main road, the fields are secluded by trees on three sides, and a high dry stone wall on another. My host offered me a cup of tea, and I wondered if I looked

like I was feeling the cold. I thanked him, but declined, and then we set off for a brief walk where he drew my attention to the problem: in one corner, near a thicket of trees, a cloud of black birds could be seen wheeling and diving, their raucous cries clearly audible through the still, oppressive air.

Crows were present in great abundance. I was shown how they find their way into the cages, whereupon they devour the feed, kill the chicks, and cause havoc when they find they're stuck and go absolutely ballistic trying to find their way out. It was immediately clear why he had called me; he'd set traps, with limited success, but he needed a firmer approach. A shotgun was out of the question, given the nature of the business, but an airgun would be the perfect tool for the job.

I was handed the keys to his quad bike, with the assurance that the corvids were used to it, and I set off toward the far corner. I got to within perhaps 75 yards, when what looked like every crow in

Scotland rose up from the ground and out of the trees like a scene from 'The Hobbit'. I stopped and watched as the flock lazily alighted in a copse, in a field some half a mile away. I swear they were sniggering.

Keeping an eye on their new position, I took a walk around the cages and pens, and quickly despatched four crows stuck behind the netting. I'd brought my .22 Daystate Regal for the task, and was struck by just how appropriate a moderated PCP was for the job in hand - laser accuracy, and no noise to panic the young game birds.

IN THE HIDE

I then recce'd the hedgerow near the thicket, and found a goodlooking spot that afforded a wide arc of fire, and in which the nettles were under 12-feet high. By the time I'd wrestled myself into



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ast month, I described an experiment that showed roughly how much air pressure was needed to get a range of pellets moving, and the results were very surprising, with some pellets apparently needing three times as much pressure as others, they had very thin skirts, and they not only moved, but also exited the barrel at the lowest pressure I'd tested. It seemed a good idea to repeat the experiment with even lower pressures.

The JSB manufactured pellets are rightly very popular among

'To help shed light on that, I needed to know the degree of air pressure needed to get them

moving in the barrel."

if not more. The pellets that moved under the least pressure had three things in common; they were all manufactured by JSB,

outdoor target shooters, field target (FT) and hunter field target (HFT), and with good reason; they tend to have very good ballistic

coefficients, which is both a measure of their ability to retain velocity in flight to give flatter trajectories, and a good measure of their resistance to wind drift. Unlike airgun hunters, who can (and should) decline to take a shot if the wind is too strong, FT and

HFT shooters have to take shots, regardless of ranges and wind conditions, and so a pellet's ability to resist wind drift to a degree is highly valued.

The external ballistic characteristics of the thin skirt, JSB manufactured pellets are well known, but my current interest is their internal ballistics, especially in the effect on the shot cycle of the springer. To help shed light on that, I needed to know the degree of air pressure needed to get them moving in the barrel.

To recap, I initially turned a 30mm long, 25mm diameter cylinder out of engineering plastic, drilled a 14mm axial hole, and dropped it into the cylinder of my old HW77 ahead of the piston, creating a massive amount of lost volume, shortening the stroke, and setting the maximum possible cylinder air pressure at 200 psi. I then raised the peak cylinder pressure by progressively shortening the cylinder, and noted the pressures at which each pellet started to move. Having now run out of plastic rod, I made another 30mm long cylinder from aluminium, and ran a series of tests, in which I enlarged the hole to lower the peak air pressure progressively.

The first pellet to move was the Air Arms Field, which started between 157 psi and 168 psi; followed by the Air Arms Express, which started between 126psi and 142 psi. The Falcon Accuracy Plus started to move between 112 psi and 126 psi.

CYLINDER PULSE

It seems that very thin skirts distort, and create a seal at very low cylinder pressures, getting the pellet moving far earlier in the shot cycle, whereas thicker skirted pellets - and presumably any



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TECHNICAL AIRGUN: MAINSPRING VIBRATION



made from harder alloys - don't seal until the pressure is much higher. Until they do start sealing, there must be a degree of blow-by (air escaping between the piston skirt and barrel), which will impact

both on energy efficiency and the recoil cycle. The very low pressure requirement of the three, thin-skirted pellets means that they start to move while the piston still has in the order of between

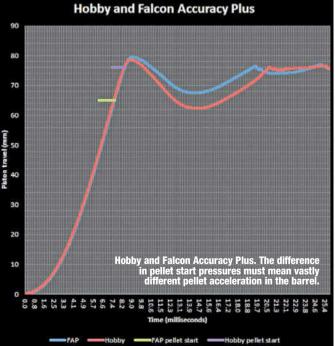
16mm and 12mm to travel before bouncing, which means they must have a relatively long and very gentle acceleration in the barrel, compared to pellets that don't budge until the cylinder pressure is in the region of 600 psi, when the piston only has around 5mm or less of travel before bouncing. **EXTREMES**

To see the effect a pellet's skirt

might have on the shot cycle, I tested Falcon Accuracy Plus, which started to move at circa 120 psi, and RWS Hobby, which didn't move until in the region of 600 psi. The pellets are roughly the same weight - 7 grains for the Hobby and 7.3 grains the Falcons - and gave roughly the same sort of muzzle velocities through my HW77.

I've tested these two pellets through the HW77 before, but this time. I knew the pellets' start pressures, and hence the position of the piston when they started to move. The Falcon Accuracy Plus moved 0.8 milliseconds ahead of the Hobby, and it was a big surprise when the two pellets exited the muzzle at roughly the same time. The Hobby must have undergone blistering initial acceleration to catch up with the Falcon at the muzzle, due to the much higher cylinder pressure at which it started to move. It was in the barrel for 2.33 milliseconds, whereas the Falcon Accuracy Plus took 3.1 milliseconds to travel the length of the barrel. That meant the Hobby average velocity in the barrel was 661 fps, which is 83% of the muzzle velocity, but the Falcon Accuracy Plus average was just 497 fps, 60% of its muzzle velocity.

The graph 'Hobby and Falcon Accuracy Plus' shows calculated piston position throughout the shot cycle. You can see that the stroke is a fraction longer with the Falcon Accuracy Plus, and that's because the pellet's travel up the barrel is increasing the barrel air volume





DIESELING

The trend for thin-skirt pellets to be more energy-efficient than those with thicker skirts not only goes out of the window if the rifle diesels, it is reversed. To find out why, read my other article this month, which explains all.



and lowering cylinder pressure, which is also apparent in the lesser Falcons, incidentally, left the muzzle with 11.7 ft.lbs., the Hobby with 9.7 ft.lbs.

Although the recoil cycle with the two pellets is different, I doubt anyone would notice any difference when shooting the rifle, because the change in recoil is almost all in the surge, and changes in surge need to be significant before we are aware of them just from shooting the rifle.

EFFICIENCY

We have long believed that the sooner a pellet starts to move in the stroke, the more efficient the energy transfer from the spring to the air, and ultimately, the pellet. This belief neatly explains why airguns with short piston strokes can struggle to make muzzle energy unless they are dieseling, which gets the pellet moving earlier in the stroke and, if true, and all other things being equal, the thin-skirt pellets should be more energyefficient than those with thick skirts.

Well, it seems it is true. I tested a number of pellets with thin and thick skirts in .177 and .22 and, provided the two pellets being compared were of similar mass, the thin-skirt

'The Hobby must have undergone blistering initial piston bounce of the Falcons; the acceleration to catch up with the Falcon at the muzzle.'

pellet produced higher average muzzle energy in every single case. The difference ranged from the best part of a footpound to a tenth as much, but it was there, nonetheless. Preliminary and limited testing with a PCP suggests that the same may well apply, although to a lesser degree.

Does this mean we should all be using thin-skirt pellets? No, it does not, because energy efficiency is far from the most important consideration in pellet choice. The most important criterion remains, as it always has been, accuracy.







TECHNICAL AIRGUN

THINKING SMALL =

Jim looks into the most recent trend in DIY springer tur



n springer tuning, fashions come and go. First was the fashion to periodically squirt light mineral oil through the transfer port and cram in the largest mainspring that score the cylinder to hold lubricant that acted as a fuel. The current trend is to reduce the dimensions of the compression tube, usually called the 'swept volume'. The

volume should make them less wasteful of air at 12 ft. lbs., and hence more efficient.

There are reasons why adult-sized air rifles have the

'The current trend is to reduce the dimensions of the compression tube, usually called the 'swept volume'

would physically fit in the gun; then came the friction reducing era, when the internals were polished until they gleamed; closely followed by the diesel era, when it became the fashion to thinking behind reducing the swept volume is that most springers are capable, with enough modification, of achieving muzzle energies above the UK legal limit, and reducing the swept swept volumes they do, though, and they are these; the UK market is not large enough to warrant the costs of tailoring a rifle specifically to our needs, and export markets with higher or no muzzle energy limits would not be interested in sub-12 ft. lbs. rifles. Simple economics suggest that we're unlikely to be able to buy a low-swept volume gun off the shelf, and if you want a rifle with reduced swept volume, it looks like you're going to have to make it yourself, or adapt an existing design.

WAYS AND MEANS

The easiest way to reduce the swept volume is to reduce the length of the piston stroke, most easily achieved by fitting a frontal extension to the piston. An alternative way of shortening the stroke is to fit a longer piston rod, but making - or in some cases even fitting - a piston rod is not a job for the inexperienced. The rear of the rod that engages with the trigger mechanism must have the precise angles machined into it, and then be properly case hardened, both steps beyond the facilities and capabilities of the average DIY'er.

The alternative method of reducing the swept volume is to reduce the piston and cylinder diameter, which is achieved by fitting a sleeve, commonly seamless hydraulic pipe, inside the existing cylinder, and either making a piston with reduced diameter, or if the existing piston has enough wall thickness, turning its diameter down in a lathe.

I have tried using piston extensions on a number of rifles, and a modest reduction in piston stroke can in some circumstances be a worthwhile modification that reduces recoil, although a more substantial reduction appeared to have an adverse effect on accuracy, for reasons as yet unknown.



AIR AND ENERGY

Springer or PCP, the pellet moves in the airgun barrel because air molecules that are moving at high velocity collide with the base of the pellet, then bounce off at lower velocity and with less energy,

temperature. For a given mass of air, the internal energy is a function of its temperature, measured in degrees Kelvin (degrees Celsius plus 273). The graph 'Piston position and relative air energy' shows a fairly typical



pellet, we have to increase the peak pressure and temperature, which means we have to drive the piston nearer the cylinder end, to compress the air more. This is not mere theory, it's something I have proved for myself by setting a rifle

'The higher the air molecule's velocity, the greater their energy, so the greater the transfer of momentum to the pellet and the higher the muzzle energy'

transferring some of their momentum to the pellet in the process. The higher the air molecule's velocity, the greater their energy, so the greater the transfer of momentum to the pellet and the higher the muzzle energy.

Air molecules are also colliding with, and bouncing off, the cylinder wall, creating what we measure as pressure, and the greater their velocity and hence energy, the greater the pressure. Something else is inextricably linked to air's internal energy and pressure, and that's the air's

relationship between piston travel as a percentage of the stroke, and the energy contained in the air, and the energy level rockets as the piston nears the cylinder end wall. The units in the vertical axis are actually degrees Kelvin, which is a measure of the average kinetic energy of the air molecules.

If, for a given mass of air, its energy, pressure and temperature are all linked, what happens if we reduce the mass of air by reducing the swept volume? The answer is that, to maintain equivalent air energy, to drive the

up to produce the same muzzle energy with two different stroke lengths, then shooting pellets into a pile of rags 50 yards from the firing line, and examining the pellets' skirts. The skirts of pellets shot from the rifles with less swept volume were significantly more bulged, proving that the peak pressure was higher with the lower cylinder volume.

SLEEVING THE CYLINDER

Reducing the swept volume by sleeving the cylinder means that the piston diameter has to be



Left: 81mm piston stroke. Right: 70mm stroke. The bulge in the skirt and longer rifling indents prove that the lesser swept volume generated higher cylinder pressure.

reduced, potentially making it lighter. I have written about piston sectional density (SD) before, concluding that getting the right SD helped to drive the piston far enough along the cylinder against rapidly rising air pressure, and helped to keep it in the vicinity of the cylinder end wall long enough for the pellet to get up to speed.



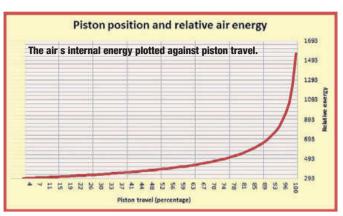
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If the SD is too low - the piston is too light - then unless there is substantial spring preload, it can bounce too early, too fast and too far, robbing the pellet of energy. If the SD is above what's needed to achieve the desired muzzle energy, it merely increases initial rearward recoil slightly.

On the surface of it, sleeving the cylinder is a win-win situation, because the amount of resistive force the piston faces from a given air pressure reduces in proportion to the piston seal's surface area. A cylinder air pressure of 400 psi, for instance, places an opposing force of 329 lbf on a 26mm





piston, against just 235 lbf on a 22mm piston. Because the force acting on the piston from compressed air is lower for a narrower piston, the piston's SD can, in theory, be reduced, which reduces the rearward recoil displacement. A narrower piston's SD cannot be strictly pro rata according to its cross sectional area, though, because it will have to compress the air to a greater extent, and will need a certain mass both in order to do so, and also to limit piston bounce.

AUTOIGNITION

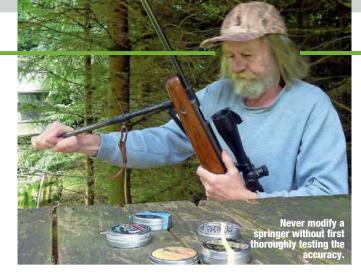
The higher cylinder peak pressure necessary for a lesser swept volume to achieve a desired muzzle energy is not necessarily a problem in itself, but the higher cylinder temperature associated with higher pressure can be, depending on how great the reduction in swept volume.

One of the themes that seem to crop up most regularly amongst those who have tried very small swept volume is autoignition causing dieseling, possibly in some cases, detonation. Another

observation is very large variations in muzzle velocity, generally attributed to variations in pellet size. Taken together, the likelihood is that slacker fitting pellets start to move earlier, reduce cylinder peak pressure, and give lower muzzle energy, but tighter pellets hang in the breech a friction longer, generating cylinder temperatures sufficiently high to initiate a chemical reaction, probably dieseling, possibly detonation.

Experiments I carried out two years ago using my .177 HW77 with the piston stroke reduced from 81mm to 70mm showed that the amount of time the pellet spent in the barrel during recoil. and during surge, were very variable, less so with the stroke lengthened to 75mm, and most consistent at 81mm. At the time, it looked as though the culprit for the inconsistency was the shortened piston stroke, but the results from sleeved rifles might point the finger at cylinder volume. The swept volume of the 70mm stroke HW77 was 34.36cc, roughly the same as a 23mm cylinder rifle with an 85mm stroke, or a 22mm cylinder rifle with a 90mm stroke, so it was time to repeat the 70mm stroke experiments to see whether or not

'It looked as though the culprit for the inconsistency was the shortened piston stroke'



A TEST FOR DIESELING?

It sounds laughably simplistic, but the muzzle energy of a springer with two pellets of equivalent weight, but vastly different start pressures, such as the Falcon Accuracy Plus and RWS Hobby, might reveal whether the rifle is dieseling. The theory is that if the Falcon gives

they could shed any light on less swept volume encouraging autoignition.

THE TEST

The spring was 20.4mm in diameter, with 3.05mm wire, 26.5 active coils, and a rate of 6.25 N/mm. I started off with 31mm of preload, which made 20.8 ft. lbs. available to the piston, and the muzzle energy with HW Field Trophy Special was a disappointing 6.8 ft. lbs.

the higher energy, the rifle is not dieseling; if the Hobby gives the higher energy, the rifle is dieseling.

LIKE all theories, this one needs putting to the test in a wide range of air rifles before it can be considered reliable or even proven.

Increasing preload to 42mm (24.34 ft. lbs. for the piston) gave 8.3 ft. lb, and increasing preload to 47mm (25.9 ft.lb. for the piston) gave 9.4 ft. lbs.

I then changed two things: I increased preload to 53mm (27.6 ft. lbs. for the piston), and I put a smear of high molybdenum grease on the side of the piston seal, because it had been running dry up to that point. The result was 11.1 ft. lb at the muzzle, and the energy increase at the muzzle was

TECHI

the same as the increase to the piston, which seems implausible, to put it mildly, without dieseling. The strange thing was that the grease I'd put on the piston seal side was no more than a fraction more than the rifle usually had, and it most certainly had not dieseled when tested at the full 81mm of piston stroke. As it now seemed to be dieseling, I tested it with the pellet that gives the highest energy in the rifle, the Falcon Accuracy Plus, to ensure it was still legal, and was amazed to find the pellet was achieving only 9.4 ft. lbs. Out of curiosity, I tried some RWS Hobby pellets, and the surprises kept coming, because they were leaving the muzzle with 11.9 ft. lbs. This was a dramatic reversal of the results I'd achieved when testing the same two pellets for my article this month about thin-skirted pellets, in which the Falcon Accuracy Plus had a muzzle energy of 11.1 ft. lbs., against the Hobby's 9.77 ft. lbs. through the same rifle with the full 81mm of piston stroke.

EXPLANATION

In reducing the swept volume, we reduce the total amount of energy in the compressed air for any given pressure, so to maintain the air's energy level it has to be compressed more, which elevates temperatures. Elevated pressures

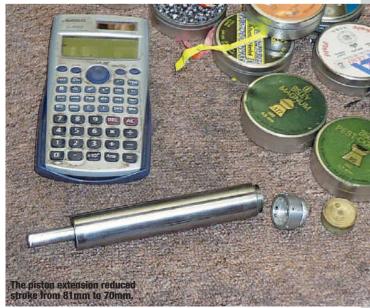
and temperatures increase the chance of autoignition.

The reason that the Hobby was pushing the legal limit with 70mm of stroke is its very high start pressure in the region of 600 psi, which will mean a cylinder air temperature at pellet start in the region of 850K, against the 540K when the Falcon Accuracy Plus started to move, which means that the Hobby has one and a half times the air energy to accelerate it, plus extra energy generated by the diesel. The Falcon Accuracy Plus, on the other hand, starts to accelerate slowly much earlier in the shot cycle, lowering the cylinder pressure, and might not generate sufficiently high temperatures to initiate autoignition, although if it does, it occurs too late in the sequence to be of much use to the pellet. At the full 81mm of stroke and in the absence of dieseling, the Hobby gets moving too late in the shot cycle, so there is insufficient time for the pellet to get up to speed before the piston bounces and pressure falls, whereas the Falcon Accuracy Plus starts moving early, and accelerates for much longer before piston bounce.

The conclusion is that reductions in swept volume necessitate increases in pressure and temperature to maintain muzzle energy. Go too small, and you run the risk of dieseling. ■

'This was a dramatic reversal of the results I'd achieved when testing the same two pellets for my article this month about thin-skirted pellets'





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COLLECTOR'S WEBLEY

PREMIER .22 in what appears to be unfired mint condition. Original label on barrel and tag on trigger guard. All in original orange cardboard box with instructions and target, £250, move forcing sale. Tel: 07970248070 (West Sussex).

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multishot, walnut stock polished by stockmaker, Lightstream 4.5-14x44 scope all finished in high gloss black by HydroGraphics. Blueprinted by John Bowkett, fired less than 50 shots, 2 magazines. Gun and scope cost £900, £780 spent, invoices supplied. £1,200. Tel: 07970248070 (West Sussex).

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LEFT HANDED AIR ARMS TX

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FALCON PRAIRE BM 8 shot .22 3x9x50 scope, charging

probe instructions, gun bag, excellent condition £345. Also Feinwerkbau stock for 127 or 124 sport, superb condition £100. BSA Goldstar 10 shot mag £20. Tel: 01189 736585 (Berkshire).

WEIHRAUCH HW100

thumbhole stock .22 carbine. Tasco 6-24x40 scope. Large air bottle with new fill and test 5 year. As new condition, £600. Tel: 07836752850 (Yorkshire).

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3-9x40 scope 2 mags vc silencer all work done by xtx air. £695. Tel: 07747783080 (Northampton).

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WEIHRAUCH KS 100 .177

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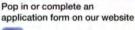


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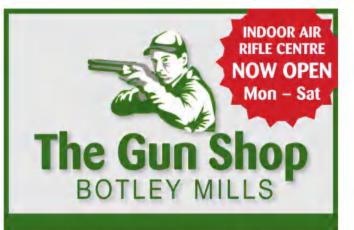




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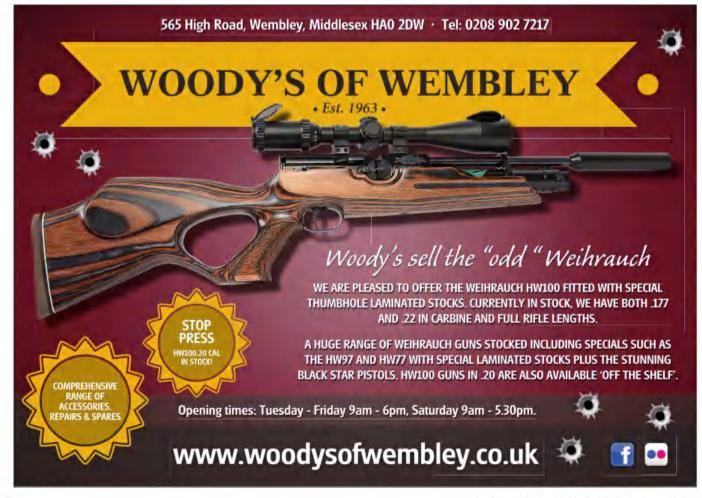


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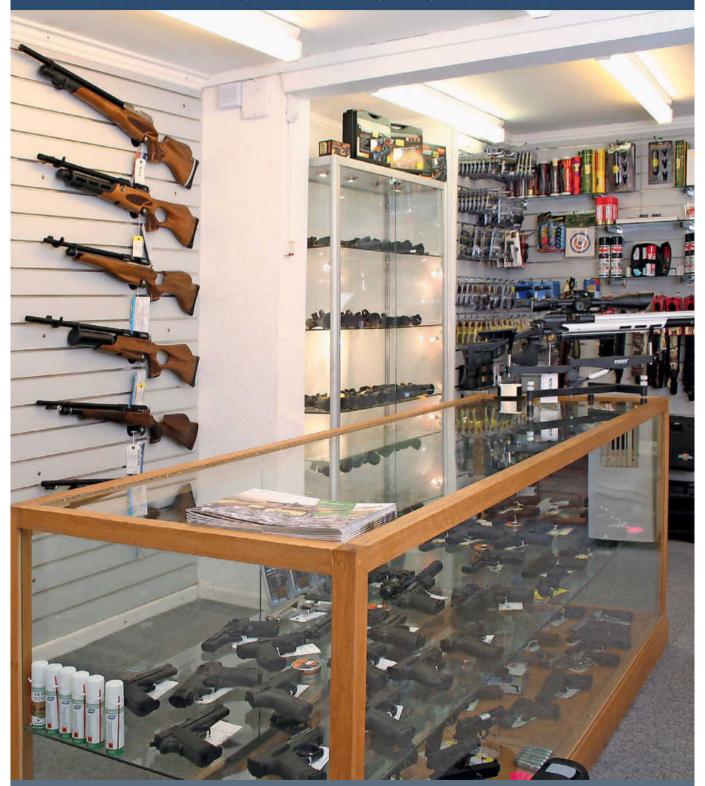
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For not a lot of money, you can get really great air rifles these days. One such rifle is the Edgar Brothers Breaker 900SX, made for them by Hatsan of Turkey - the gun is clearly aimed as an entry-level springer. As such, these guns are normally very, very basic, but this gun is so much more. The team at EB and Hatsan clearly thought about which features a basic springer should have, and went that little bit further to produce a quite surprising springer.

The first surprise is that the gun comes complete with a moderator. This is fixed to the 315mm-long barrel, making it 462mm in total, and the synthetic moderator has another trick - a front post sight,

which is a red fibre-optic rod. This has no protector hood, but it looks as if it can easily be replaced if broken, by undoing the Pozidriveheaded securing screw behind the sight element and sliding it out sideways. Of course, then it has a rear adjustable open notch sight affixed to the top of the breakbarrel breech block. This has two green, fibre-optic rods - one positioned either side of the notch. It has a 427mm sight base and the rear sight is adjustable, for windage and elevation, via steel wheels with numbers machined

into them. The open sight adjustment is really positive with audible clicks, and it's the only set of fibre-optic, open sights that I know of on a moderated breakbarrel air rifle.

SCOPE READY

If you want to fit an optical sighting system, it has standard 10.8mm dovetails machined into the top of the steel cylinder. These are 155mm long and there's a scope arrestor plate screwed to the top of the action. This cuts the effective length of the rail down to 110mm,

but that is still adequate, and the

arrestor system is needed on a recoiling, spring-powered rifle.

Next, the stock: To cater for as many new shooters as possible, it is ambidextrous. The stock is plain beech with a light-brown stained finish and the front stock screws are angled to the action, which helps to prevent them from coming undone. The pressed chequering panels, on both sides of the palm grip area, feel very nice to the touch, not too rough but perfect to aid the hold. I found the stock very good for sitting, kneeling, and standing. A brown rubber butt pad finishes off the rear of the stock.

It has classic lines and modern performance.

TOP VALUE GUNS



Cocking the rifle automatically sets the safety catch. This is situated at the top rear of the action and is very Webley Omega-like for those who remember it. The catch pops out of the back of the action, and is pushed back in once the pellet is loaded into the exposed breech making the rifle ready to fire. You cannot de-cock the rifle because it is fitted with an anti-bear trap device. On pushing the safety catch back into the action with your thumb, you can see a red dot, shown at the bottom of a groove cut into the rear plastic cap of the action. This is shown on both sides because the rifle is ambidextrous. The safety can be reset at any time by grabbing hold of the catch and pulling it back

out, a nice safety feature lacking on some rifles. The lock-up of the barrel to the action is solid, to say the least. I struggled at times to close the breech, but the rifle was brand new and once I'd got the hang of it, it was fine. The moderator has a flat, ribbed section on the top, which makes a very convenient area for the palm of the hand to strike, and break the barrel lock.

CONSISTENT POWER

Over the chronograph, the rifle gave a power output of 11.5 ft. lbs. using .22, 13.9 grain Milbro Twin Ring pellets. Shot-to-shot consistency was very good too, keeping well within the magic ten feet per second range. The curved trigger blade is metal and

very comfortable on aim with the pad of the trigger finger coming to rest nicely in the perfect position. The plastic trigger guard has a chequered section on its base for those who like to hold the rifle on aim in the standing position, with the thumb on that part of the gun.

The trigger weight was superb for a basic springer, at 1.3kg or 2lb 15oz; this aids the accuracy of the gun. I fitted a Hawke scope and shot a 24.7mm, five-shot, centre-to-centre group, at 25m from the classic, field target, sitting position, using Twin Ring Milbro 13.9 grain .22 pellets. So, the rifle is more than adequate in

SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer Hatsan Country of Origin Turkey

Distributor Edgar Brothers 01625

613177

Model 900SX BREAKER
Action Break-barrel
Type Spring-piston

Length 1120mm Pull length 370mm

Weight 3.12kg

Barrel length 462mm (Overall with moderator)

Calibre .22 on test (and .177)

Stock Ambidextrous sporter, with recoil pad.

Sights Open fibre-optic

Trigger Two-stage (1.3kg factory

RRP £114.00

the accuracy department. I was impressed with the gun for the money. At £114, it is not an expensive rifle; in fact, the Breaker will not break the bank - sorry. A moderated, opensighted rifle is a rare beast, and the Breaker is a hugely impressive budget air rifle.

"The first surprise is that the gun comes complete with a moderator"





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Despite a lack of preparation, Phil Hardman scores well on the harvest pigeons



Just a few decoys.



t's that time of the year again, folks - my absolute favourite season; harvest. I really look forward to it and dream of combine harvesters around this time of year; I stand at my door listening for the sound of the heavy machinery in a field on the edge of the village, or constantly make my wife drive the long way home so I can check, and recheck

the fields, looking for any sign of them starting to get cut. I spend hours obsessing over it, watching woodpigeons from a distance, studying their patterns, what time they come and go, where they sit, and which part of the field they're dropping down into to feed. It's the season for woodpigeon decoying, and it's all I think about. A month or so before the crops

actually get cut, I am out and about; observing flight lines, trying to work out which field will be first to be harvested, which crops are pulling the most birds, anything and everything I can do, to gain a better picture of what will happen, once the balers have left and I have the stubble to myself.

OUT OF THE GAME

So far this year, only one field has been cut, and I missed it because I attended the CLA Game Fair, so I only found out about the field on the following Monday, and couldn't actually get on to it, until the Tuesday, which meant five days had passed. Five days in decoying terms is a long time. The birds are usually waiting for the field to be cut, weeks in advance, so once it is, they swoop in en masse and very quickly remove

any traces of feed from the stubble. To make matters worse, most farmers tend to harvest around the same time, so just as things are at their busiest, another field is cut and the birds move on, often to a new area completely.

Luckily, this field is the only one I know of in my area that's been harvested already, so despite the late response from me, the birds hadn't been drawn anywhere else, and I was still in with a chance. Lady Luck may have been shining on me in that respect, but she has a strange sense of humour because she had completely abandoned me on another front. My Trusty Daystate MK4, which hasn't missed a beat in almost four years of hunting use, and abuse, decided that now would be a good time to develop a leak. I will admit, Daystate recommend a >>



service every three years, which I ignored, so it was well overdue, and completely my own fault, but it put the MK4 out of action.

My good mate, Leon Fairless, stepped in with an offer to loan me his FX Wildcat, which I accepted, but this wasn't without problems, either. You see, his FX is a .22, and its almost a decade since I did any serious hunting with the larger calibre, instead preferring to use a .177, and I can count on one hand the number of times I've used anything other than an electronic Daystate in the last six years, so switching back to a mechanical trigger would take some getting used to.

WILDCAT

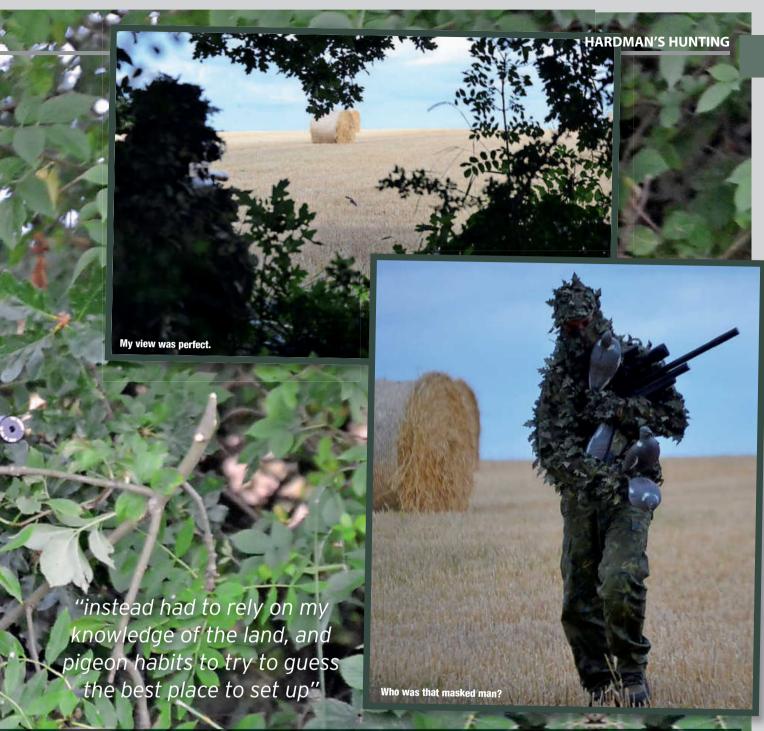
I found myself extremely excited at the prospect of this new challenge as I packed up the gear; half a dozen plastic decoys, the Wildcat, pellets, a bottle of pop, and a few bags of crisps. It was 10am by the time I arrived at the field, and I was working blind, having not been unable to conduct a recce session beforehand. Instead, I had to rely on my knowledge of the land, and pigeon habits, to try to guess the best place to set up. I have four places that I tend to use on this field, and going by today's wind direction and what I have done in previous years, I decided to set up on the western edge.

The wind was blowing from the

south, so the birds would land side-on, facing into the wind, and that gives a nice target as they touch down and sit up alert for a few seconds, but also meant that I had to shoot into a wind that I could not feel, or see, from my sheltered position. I set the pattern up as quickly as I could, the closest bird about 10 yards out, and the furthest at 30, mimicking a real flock of feeding birds as closely as I could. It's difficult for me to explain exactly how I position my decoys. It's a skill I have built up over many years of observing real birds so I can stand back and kind of see if they look good or not. The first birds will usually confirm a good pattern.

You want them to drop in and land confidently, with little to no hesitation, but if they circle, or turn away, something isn't right, so rearrange them if the birds don't seem happy.

Once I was confident I had a good pattern, I hopped into the bushes at the edge of the field to find the best position from which to shoot. I sat between a pair of oak trees, under a slight overhang that kept me shaded from the sun, and would help with concealment. I was wearing the hoodie, gloves and mask from my Jack Pyke Light Leaf Concealment Suit, which I never go decoying without. Gone are the days of building a hide only to find the wind has



changed on the day of the shoot, and all that work was for nothing. Now, I simply don the suit and sit wherever the birds are. It's like a hide that you wear, and if you need to change position - fine, no problem; just get up and move.

HERE THEY COME

The day started pretty quickly, the first bird arriving about three minutes after I got into position. I'd taken the rifle from its case and filled the magazine, before practising shouldering the gun smoothly a few times, making sure nothing would snag. The safety catch is right at the back of the action, just above the butt pad, so I rehearsed flicking it from 'safe' to

'fire' a couple of times, and it was then that the bird arrived. I didn't even see it touch down, but I heard the flapping of wings.

Sinking in behind the scope, I lined up the shot and slipped the trigger, only for nothing to happen. In my excitement, I had left the safety catch on and now had to fumble around trying to find it with the rifle on aim. The bird was only 20 yards out, staring right at me, so after a nervy few seconds, I was relieved to let the actual shot go.

It's funny, when you haven't shot .22 for a while, the apparent lack of velocity of the pellet makes it seem like an age before the shot hits home. Once it did, though, it bowled the bird over stone dead

- a textbook headshot. The downed bird flapped a bit as its nervous system took over, and this attracted another pair. I shuffled the cocking lever to slip another JSB pellet up the spout, and got ready, sinking myself lower in my seat to try to conceal myself as best I could. These two landed with the utmost confidence as their fallen mate now lay motionless, wings outstretched. They dropped down into the stubble and paused, I was already on the lead bird, but I caught a glimpse of the second one landing a few yards closer, so I switched my target and lined up on its skull, then lowered my aim slightly. Sending the shot out, I watched

the pellet zip through the air, and then a small puff of feathers flew up as the pellet hit home and the bird simply toppled forward without so much as opening its wings. This is a brainstem shot, at the base of the skull where it joins to the neck, and it renders the pigeon totally and completely paralysed by severing any connection with the brain and the rest of the body. It's an instant kill, and does away with the flapping, which can throw feathers all over the place, and feathers in a decoy pattern serve as a warning to other birds, so it's best avoided, if you can. Two for two, and I was impressed with the little FX. I cocked the rifle again and then



ran out to pull in two plastic birds, which I do as soon as I can when decoying. There is no substitute for the real thing, and shot birds are by far the most realistic decoys you can get. Plastic ones simply enable you to start somewhere, and get the shot ones in the first place.

SLOW BUT STEADY

The going was slow, but steady, with birds arriving every 10 or 20 minutes. It was certainly enough to keep my attention, as I constantly scanned the sky, watching hoping, 'yeah, here they come'. There is no feeling on earth like watching a bird enter the field 200 yards away, wings back, dropping fast, swaying slightly side to side as it bleeds off speed before arriving downwind

exhilarating. 'Come on!' you think, and then it's there, a yard, two feet, wings flapping hard as it slows and extends its feet. It's no longer watching for danger; it's fully committed to landing. Now is your chance! Rifle up, not fast, smoothly, no jerky movements, on aim, cross hairs straight on to the bird which has now touched down and is sitting up, fully alert, scanning the hedge. It's looking for danger; it's looking for you! Thanks to your camo and shady position, it can't see you, but you can see it, and you've already lined up the shot. You have a few seconds before it either begins to feed, in which case its head will be constantly moving, or it spots

something's not right and takes to the air again, but you're ready, and within a couple of seconds it's down. Before you have even reloaded the gun, your eyes are back to the sky, looking for the next one. It's addictive, and no amount of me enthusing about it here will give you any idea of just how good it is. For that, you'll have to get out there and see for yourself!

The first few hours saw me take 10 birds for 10 shots; a 100% kill rate, but as the day wore on and I became more fatigued, I missed a couple through simply forgetting I was shooting a .22, and instinctively reverting to my .177 aim points.

There is always a lull in the action around

roost and digest their morning's haul, but it resumed again in the afternoon, around 1pm, and I stayed out until 5pm. The final tally was 17 birds, which was a fairly decent result considering I was pretty much having a stab in the dark, something I highly advise against doing when I am giving advice on pigeon decoying to people wishing to try it. The more you put in beforehand, the more you will be rewarded on the day of the shoot. I have said it a million times before, and despite this result, I stand by that. Today I got lucky! See you all next month.









ACCURACY

Phill Price runs us through a little list that will help you to connect with your target

1. CHECK YOUR ZERO

There's no point in pulling the trigger if you don't know if your gun is zeroed. Get it set perfectly, and check it often. In a competition, a gun that isn't zeroed properly might cause you to miss, but out hunting you might wound rather than kill, and that must be avoided.



4. ADJUST YOUR TRIGGER

Does your rifle have an adjustable trigger? Most high-quality rifles do, and it's well worth reading the manual and then setting it to your personal preference. Hunting guns should never be set lighter than 1½ lbs, but competition guns can be.

5. CLEAN YOUR BARREL

Barrels don't need to be cleaned often, but now and then it's worth doing. Be sure to use only products designed for airguns, and take care. Avoid using metal brushes: use felt discs and patches instead, which will remove the accumulation of lead. You'll need to fire a few shots to settle the barrel again before best

accuracy is achieved.

GET YOUR GUN SERVICED

Getting a professional gunsmith to service your rifle once a year is a very good investment. Having every part checked and correctly lubed improves reliability and avoids excessive wear, so your precious gun will last longer too.

7. CHECK THE POWER

Checking your rifle's power does two things; firstly, it ensures that the rifle is legal and the power hasn't gone up over the limit; secondly, if the power has dropped, it could be a sign that there's a fault, which needs to be corrected before you use the rifle again. If you don't own a chronograph, ask your local gun shop to run the test for you.

8. SHOOT IN A JACKET **ALL YEAR ROUND**

A supportive jacket can help to stabilise your upper body and you'll see many serious competition shooters wear them for every shot. Find one that's

comfortable, and wear it all the time while you're shooting. It will add consistency to your aim, which in return, improves accuracy.

9. PRACTISE WHAT YOU'RE BAD AT

We tend to shoot in the way we get the best results, but to improve we need to practise our weakest stance. For most people, this is standing, so always take some standers every time you practise. Your muscles will get used to the effort and you'll become more stable and effective.

10 LEARN YOUR **TRAJECTORY**

Our pellets fly in an arc from the moment they leave the barrel, and we need to know where in this trajectory our target is. Place paper targets out from 10 to 35 yards at 5-yard intervals and then shoot at the centre with no compensation. In this way, you'll see how the impact point rises and falls over the distance. You'll learn a lot, believe me.

11. SHOOT ON WINDY DAYS

The biggest enemy of accuracy for the airgun pellet is the wind. Only experience and judgement will allow you to make the right compensation, so get out and practise on windy days. It will be frustrating, but you'll learn from every shot and build your experience ready for when the shots matters most.

Shooting alongside like-minded people will improve your shooting skills no end. You'll get tips and useful information from your club-mates, as well as shooting more than you would alone. 'Trigger time' is vital to becoming a better shot, and having fun with friends at your club will encourage you to shoot more.

2. CHECK YOUR EYE **RELIEF**

When did you last check that your scope is in the perfect position for you? Check the rifle is unloaded and then mount the scope, with your eyes shut. As you open them what do you see? Try moving the scope backwards and forwards in the mounts until you get the most natural position.

3. SORT YOUR PELLETS

Sort through each tin of pellets as you get them, putting the perfect ones aside for hunting or competition use, and using the others for plinking or practice. Carry the good ones in a neck pouch to protect them from damage while you're out.

Pellets damaged in transit should be put aside for practice.













Just now and then it's worth giving your barrel a careful clean.



13. BUY NEW BOOTS

Boots are the foundation of every shot, so treat yourself to some supportive ones that are comfortable and waterproof. Hunters need good grip and stability to cover rough ground and taking a fall while carrying a loaded rifle could be very dangerous.

14. PRACTISE RANGEFINDING

As mentioned earlier, our pellets fly in a curved trajectory so it's vital to know how far away our target is. As you walk around in your everyday life, guess the distance to an object ahead, and then count your steps until you reach it. You'll soon get better at ranging, but don't stop trying. It's a tough skill to master, so keep on trying every day.

15. BUY A RANGEFINDER

Despite what I wrote in point 14, buying a rangefinder is a great investment for the hunter. Knowing exactly how far away your target is allows for precision aiming. Today they're light, small, reliable, and waterproof, and I carry one on all my hunting trips. I'll take advantage of anything that

makes me more accurate.

16. LEARN THE KILL ZONES

Airguns kill with precision, not power, and only a pellet placed precisely will kill cleanly. The easy rule to follow is to aim for the brain, which is simple to identify in birds, but a little more tricky on a rabbit. Draw an imaginary line back from the eye down to below

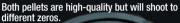


the ear and you'll be in the right place. Nowhere else will do.

17. NEVER MIX PELLETS

Some hunters think they can use a roundhead pellet for long-range and then swap to a hollow-point for close-range work. This won't work because it's very rare that two pellets will shoot to the same zero. Get your zero perfect

with one pellet and stick with it. Also, check your zero when you buy more pellets, even if they're the same type. Batches can vary so check and be sure.





18. SAFE CARRY

Most of the damage that's inflicted on guns happens in transit, so use a thickly padded case. There are lots of good ones on the market these days and they needn't be expensive. Check for thick padding all round and that the zips are strong and of good quality. The reason that most rifle slips fail is that the zips break, so choose big, chunky ones that can take the pressure.

19. KEEP IT CLEAN

There's a good reason why manufacturers put dust covers over the filling connectors on pre-charged pneumatic guns.

Dust, dirt and grit on the surface of these delicate parts will be driven into the rifle's internal mechanism by high-pressure air as you fill the gun. Once inside, it can cause scratches and seals to fail, which will mean a full strip and rebuild. You have been warned. Keep the covers on.

SUPER-H-POINT

20. TEST YOURSELF

If you want to know your maximum hunting range, here's an easy test. Shoot at 30mm discs and the distance at which you can keep every shot in the black is your maximum. This must be done from typical hunting stances, not from a benchrest. You might be surprised by how tough a challenge it is. Turn to page 97 where the editor really focuses on this point.





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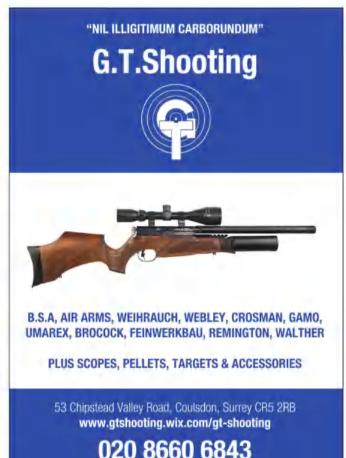
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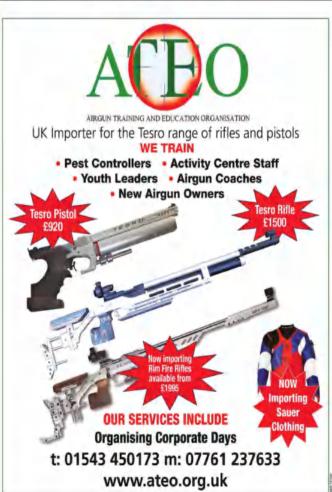
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The sport of hunting with an air rifle demands that we all know exactly what our effective range really is. Not what we'd like it to be, not what it should be, not what our hardware says it could be, and not what we can do off a rest in ideal conditions, but what it actually is, in the hunting field. Trust me, there's a vast difference between the real world, and demands, of hunting, and the world some of us imagine.

NOT HUNTING

When we're at the club, or plinking at our leisure, we occasionally achieve remarkable levels of efficiency. That 60-yard target tumbles three times on the trot, we splatter a distant thistle flower, or we form a tiny cluster of pellets on a 50-yard target card. We feel great about such feats, and deservedly so, but we must never, ever regard them as proof of our ability to hunt live quarry at such ranges. Yes, the rifles can do business. It's a 'do it every time'

business, when those remarkable shots must give way to the closest thing to robotic efficiency we can manage.

HUNTING

When we're hunting, there's no settling-in shots to suss the wind or the range. Hunting is a one-shot, humane end to our quarry's life, and that means placing every pellet where it does its job best. To do this, you absolutely must be realistic about your personal effective ranges from every stance you use in the hunting field. If you can't get within that range, you can't take the shot. That's the deal and there's no negotiation.

UNREALISTIC

I've seen people on various Internet forums claim that they can take quarry out to 60 yards with sub-12 ft.lbs. air rifles, and perhaps this remarkable feat has been pulled off



claim to have done this can call '60 yards' their effective range. Their real effective range is that at which ALL of their shots can be grouped inside a 30mm circle. I'll repeat that; your effective range is not dictated by your longest kill, but by what you can do every time, under hunting conditions.

REALISTIC

I failed at 35

yards. More training

Now, get yourself some target

cards, draw around a 2p piece a few times, pace out 20 yards, metres, or whatever, and set up the target. Shoot 10 shots from the standing, kneeling, sitting and prone stances, and see how many pellets strike inside, and outside, those circles. Then, keep moving the targets out, a couple of yards at a time, and give it your very best shot. You'll be shocked at your results - but you'll know your limits, and that's the vital thing.

TRAINING - NOT DELUSION

Your job now is either to accept those limitations, or to train yourself into greater efficiency. Don't hang on to your delusions; you owe yourself, your quarry, and your sport, more than that. See you next month for some more training tips.



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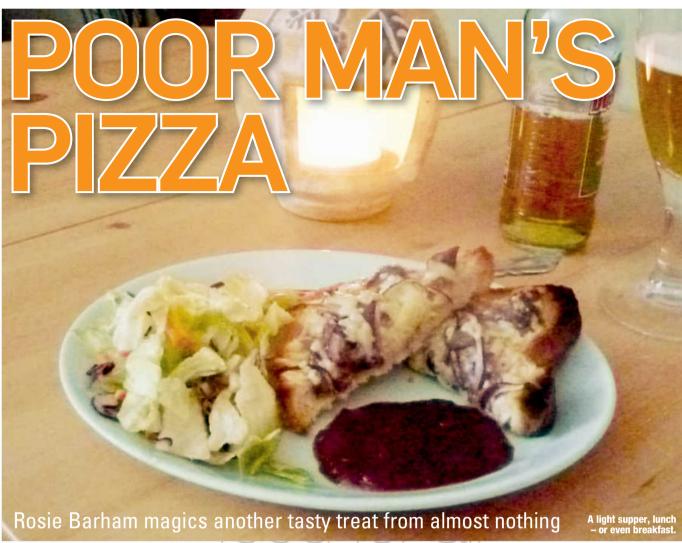
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have a friend who makes the best cheese on toast ever, just by using a few extra ingredients or leftovers, from the fridge, and a little imagination, so I've stolen the idea. One evening recently, I wasn't hungry enough for a main meal, having had lunch with a mate at a local carvery, and I didn't fancy beans, eggs or cheese on toast, so I stood in front of the fridge and waited for inspiration to strike. Fortunately, it did before I felt the need to wear gloves and a woolly hat.

I found a handful of dodgy mushrooms and a pigeon breast, raked out the grated cheese, chopped up a red onion, mixed it all together in a bowl with some seasoning, and just threw everything on top of some thick, crusty bread - I'd already rubbed the untoasted side of the bread with a garlic clove. If you wish, you can sear the thinly sliced pigeon breast whilst the bread is toasting,

"I stood in front of the fridge and waited for inspiration to strike"

but I like my pigeon slightly pink, so I just lobbed it in with the rest of the ingredients. After about ten minutes under the grill, the mixture had cooked through, the

cheese had melted and turned golden, and I was on a winner.

There are loads of combinations



for this dish, too. Any cooked meat is good, with the appropriate accompaniment: shredded pork with a dash of barbecue sauce. lamb with mint, roast beef with horseradish, rabbit and onion you can even create veggie ones, with the traditional pizza ingredients, tomato, red pepper, mushrooms and basil leaves. As long as you mix it all in a bowl with the grated cheese, it will turn out fine. It's also a good talking point when you offer someone squirrel on toast for their lunch. I know this is true, because I've tried it. It's very tasty, by the way, with wafer-thin strips of squirrel, a little garlic, and a few squashed pine nuts for crunch.

Try a faux pizza when you're bored with plain old cheese on toast. It's quick, easy, versatile, delicious, and ideal lunchtime grub on a day when you don't want to be in the kitchen for too



Sliced onions, mushrooms, pigeon breast, bread, grated cheese.

INGREDIENTS:

Thick, crusty bread

One garlic clove

Wafer-thin sliced pigeon

Grated cheese

Thinly sliced mushrooms

A few red onion rings

METHOD:

Cut the bread to about one inch thick.

Toast one side of it, and turn over.

Rub the garlic clove over the untoasted side.

Mix your chosen ingredients in a bowl.

Pile on top of the toast.

Bung under the grill for as long as it takes.

Serve with a side salad, and a sweet chutney, if you like.

The beer is compulsory.



Rub untoasted side with garlic.



Drizzle with a little olive oil.



Mix all topping ingredients in a bowl.



Pile onto the half-toasted bread.



Remove from grill when cheese is bubbling and golden.



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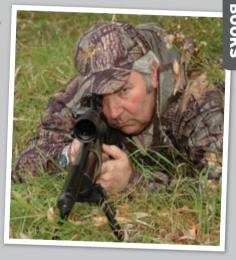
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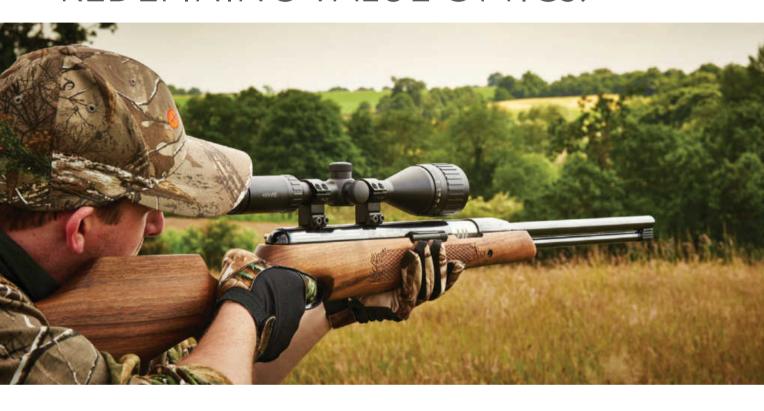
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